

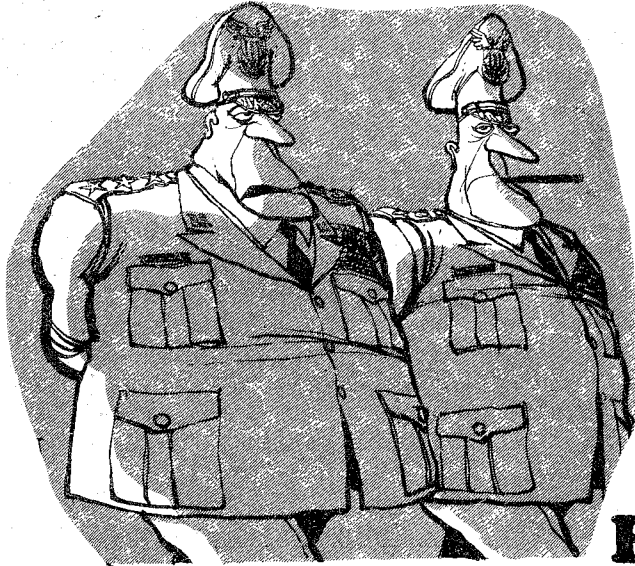
THE BICENTENNIAL CAREY MCWILLIAMS

THE

NATION

APRIL 12, 1975

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LETTERS

Scoop and Joe

New York City

Robert Sherrill's perceptive essay on Senator Jackson and his Presidential aspirations ["Casing the Democrats: Senator Jackson Enters Right," *The Nation*, Feb. 1] was evocative for me, particularly Sherrill's conclusion: "... Jackson offers nothing but the lingering fear that he may indeed mean some of the things he says."

In May 1953, as editors of the *National Guardian*, Cedric Belfrage and I were summoned before the Permanent Senate Subcommittee on Government Operations (Joe McCarthy, chairman; Henry Jackson, then a member, now chairman). The stated purpose of the inquiry was expenditure of U.S. Government funds in setting up the postwar German press, an operation in which both Belfrage and I had been involved. That stated purpose, of course, was a cover for an inquisition.

At one point in executive session, I was pressed by Jackson about my answers to a War Department questionnaire asking whether I belonged to any organization advocating the overthrow by violent means, etc. I had answered "no." That was 1945, I believe, and I trust it will not diminish my community standing if I note that I had been cleared by both the FBI and Army security.

Jackson seemed keen to nail me as a liar, but in the midst of his foray McCarthy intruded brusquely: "I think the statute of limitations has run out on this fellow." This unexpected assist puzzled me until I realized that Joe simply didn't want Scoop stealing his thunder.

The chief victim of that 1953 encounter was Belfrage, who was forced to leave the United States as a direct result of his appearance. (He had been born in Great Britain.) Jackson had no objection to this gross violation of the First Amendment's guarantee of a free press, let alone a grosser violation of human rights.

Belfrage, who lives in Mexico, and I are collaborating on a history of the *National Guardian* and its cold-war time. Jackson may rate a footnote. *James Aronson*

last chance

Hamilton, Ohio

Sen. Frank Church has assured us that his committee's investigation of the CIA will take care not to embarrass, discredit or weaken the agency. We should all protest! This is the first time in over twenty-five years that the United States has had the chance to defend itself against the Invisible Government: if we muffle this one, we may never have another. Current investigations should all start with the assumption that we are going to eliminate most, if not all, of our cloak-and-dagger idiocies, and ask only if there is conclusive evidence that any of them should be retained. *Wm. Palmer Taylor*

sunshine conspiracy

Tepoztlán, Morelos, México

What a long-delayed pleasure to read L.S. Stavrianos' commentary on the prevalent U.S. intellectual "Mandarin View of China" [*The Nation*, Feb. 8—I have just received the issue], a perspective too apparent even in *The Nation*.

As a former professional historian of sorts, I was necessarily struck by the presence in the same issue of Ronald Radosh's report on CIA recruiting at the most recent meetings of the American Historical Association: the academy is unchanged, I thought. Yet perhaps there may be some hope so long as a Radosh reacts to the pussyfooting "objectivity" that characterizes the profession and an emeritus professor at a prestigious university sees through the myopia that afflicts our leading liberal erudite pontificators and *The Nation* publishes them. *Beatrice B. Robinson*

Cover illustration: Oliphant, *The Denver Post*

EDITORIALS

The Shameful Truth

The disastrous rout of panic-stricken troops in South Vietnam has suddenly and dramatically illuminated the folly of American intervention in that unhappy land. American military advisers on the scene express surprise that troops trained under their supervision should, in a few days and without a fight, have surrendered nearly two-thirds of the country. These troops were not overpowered or out-gunned; they abandoned perhaps \$1 billion in American-supplied arms and equipment. They simply lacked the will to fight, which, in the circumstances, should surprise no one. It has been a matter of international notoriety that senior command posts in ARVN have gone to political appointees, that corruption is rampant and that morale has been a problem since the war began. Troops and people alike are utterly weary of a war that has never had much meaning for them.

The Communists seized Ban Me Thuot in three days and, according to Malcolm Browne in *The New York Times*, met with almost no resistance; indeed "most of the government troops remained in the town with them." When it became known in Huế that officers and their families were pulling out, along with civil administrators, panic quickly spread and the great exodus was on. Thousands of soldiers and civilians streamed down Highway 1 toward the presumed safety of Da Nang, only to have the same drama re-enacted there. In effect, Da Nang was captured by Saigon's own troops, rather than the North Vietnamese. Browne reports: "The reign of terror of government forces in the city cost many lives and effectively kept aid from being sent in and kept refugees from getting out. The government soldiers were prepared to kill anyone, including women and children, to escape the city. . . . The commander of the whole northern region . . . spent his final day on a boat off the Da Nang coast watching helplessly as his renegade army roared through the dying city, waiting for the Northern Vietnamese to come in and restore order."

Nor should there be any surprise about or any misreading of the massive civilian exodus from the Central Highlands. No doubt, some fled from political choice or because they had reason to fear reprisal. The long struggle against the French often took on aspects of a civil war, and left the Vietnamese with a heritage of mutual fears and hatred that cut across even family and village ties; in part, this accounts for the volume of the exodus. But the mass of refugees fled for all kinds of nonpolitical reasons: to quit what might become a battle zone; to escape expected retaliatory air raids from the South that never came; because they feared separation from relatives or followed husbands and fathers in the armed services who were fleeing; some from sheer panic and fright and others because they were caught up in the flood of refugees and were carried along with it.

It would be difficult for even the most confirmed hawk to find in this dreadful exodus evidence of a people fighting for "national independence" or to protect their native lands from invading alien forces. The ghastly horrors

and unbearable tragedy of the exodus may finally drive home the bitter truth: the North Vietnamese represent the forces seeking unification of Vietnam and its liberation from colonial control and neocolonial intervention by non-Asian powers. Of course, by failing to back Ho Chi Minh, an authentic national hero and patriot, as we had backed Tito in Yugoslavia, we made it possible for the Communists to get a hammer lock on the national liberation movement. But that does not change the basic character of the movement. Wars of national liberation can be held back, checked, prolonged, but in the end few have been suppressed in the last quarter-century. Many of our "best and brightest" and most of our "worst and dumbest" thought they knew how to use a war of liberation as part of a global strategy of "containing" communism. So they set out to win the hearts and minds of the Vietnamese, many of whom today, and with good reason, are bitterly anti-American. This initial catastrophic mistake was compounded by the Kissinger-Nixon phony Paris agreement which robbed Washington of any further leverage and, at the same time, offered Thieu no incentive to establish a regime that might have been able to negotiate a settlement. Today it is too late. "Why should the other side be interested in coalition or negotiations now?" the prominent anti-Communist Ton That Thien said to Malcolm Browne. "They have won." And he is right; for all practical purposes the war is over—for the Vietnamese but not for us. It will haunt us for decades, not so much because we made the initial mistake of backing the French or because we later withdrew American forces and denied further aid but because we betrayed our own national ideals when we intervened. It was not so much that we wanted to win the hearts and minds of the Vietnamese as that we sought for our own ends—real or imagined—to contain Russian and Chinese influence in the area. In the process we made a battleground of a country whose people wanted nothing so much as a chance to work out their historic destiny in their own way. That the Russians and Chinese backed the North with military equipment and supplies, if not with troops, does not make our intervention less a crime. That is the truth we will not soon forget.

'Mentally Deranged'

First reports of the killing of King Faisal described his assassin as "mentally deranged" or acting out of revenge for the killing of his brother by Saudi security forces some ten years ago. The media in this country heaved an almost audible sigh of relief; the killing was not political and things would go on pretty much as they had under the late good King Faisal. But then came a second wave of stories about Prince Faisal Aziz as a student at the University of Colorado, at Berkeley and at San Francisco State, which made the point that, while he was once arrested on a drug charge and was only a mediocre student, he gave no outward evidence of being "mentally deranged." And then the authorities in Riyadh announced that he had been found sane and must stand trial, thus cruelly undercutting the assumption that Faisal's death would not upset our plans and policies in the Persian Gulf or the flow of oil to U.S. ports.

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Publisher
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Editor
CAREY McWILLIAMS

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THE
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What the assassination actually signifies is the beginning of what could be a period of revolutionary turbulence in oil-rich sectors of the Middle East, including Saudi Arabia. The oil billions pouring into that area are having, among others, two destabilizing effects: the enlarging of an educated class, more and more of whom will study abroad, and the meteoric rise in expectations of affluence among their impoverished citizenry. Historically, these two factors have been the seedlings of radical unrest. In despotic dictatorships, one can expect that their maturation will have violent consequences. *Business Week* says that King Faisal "had become, in some respects, the hinge of the Arab world." Certainly he had assumed key status in the thinking of those who shape American policy; witness \$2 billion in U.S. arms sales to Saudi Arabia, the setting up of military training programs and the dispatch of a large contingent of mercenaries who will train security forces there. Faisal's assassination will probably not disrupt relations immediately, but it signals the ultimate unraveling of American policy in the Persian Gulf. To pour arms into this highly unstable region at the rate we have been doing is an invitation to disaster; one might even say that it implies that American policy makers are politically if not mentally deranged. Senator Kennedy, and those of his colleagues who support his initiative, should press forward with their proposed study of American policy in the region—its as-

sumptions, programs and "executive agreements," with particular attention to any commitments that have been given or implied.

A Small Step

In relation to all the bad news emanating from the Middle East, and the recriminations coming out of Washington to rationalize Secretary Kissinger's failure as international matchmaker, it was encouraging to hear that Egyptian President Sadat will reopen the Suez Canal in June to most international traffic. Similarly welcome was news that Sadat is renewing the United Nations truce force mandate in the Sinai for another three months. It was to expire April 24.

But Sadat's gesture shouldn't earn him any peace prizes. Israeli ships and cargo will still be denied passage through the canal—closed since 1967—and in the past the U.N. mandate has been extended for six-month intervals. Sadat's actions do indicate some movement, especially considering the limited range of options usually attributed to him and what were, until these late March announcements more limited expectations about his willingness to exercise them. The two announcements deserve positive response from the Israelis and encouragement by the U.S. Administration and Congress.

Thoughts on the Bicentennial

Carey McWilliams

Observance of the Bicentennial began officially—by act of Congress—on February 24 and will extend through December 31, 1976; indeed the period may be further extended to 1989 to correspond with the 200th anniversary of the Constitution, if legislation introduced by Sen. Charles Mathias is adopted. Make no mistake, the Bicentennial is going to be a super-spectacular; it will gather momentum rapidly throughout the year and the bands and fireworks and oratory of 1976 will exert an important if imponderable influence on the Presidential election.

Prospects for the Bicentennial have gone from bright to dim to brilliant. The mood was euphoric when the initial plans were discussed in 1966. Dr. Wernher von Braun, for example, casually suggested that we might want to send the President to a space station where, in living color, on prime time, he could address the universe. Instead we sent the last elected President packing to San Clemente and at that he was lucky. But even before Watergate, plans for the Bicentennial had come a cropper through favoritism, incompetence, mismanagement and every imaginable error. The American Revolution Bicentennial Commission was abolished and its successor organization, the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration, got off to a weak start with an inadequate budget. Indeed for a time it seemed as though the Bicentennial might have to be called off because of ineptitude, lack of interest and the darkening Washington scene. But

as we sank deeper into the mire of Watergate and related scandals, interest in the Bicentennial paradoxically brightened. Now it is clear that we are in for a festival of national self-congratulation of a kind that no living American has seen before and that the country will not see again for another century—if ever.

Madison Avenue is afire with enthusiasm. Vast sums have been committed to an astonishing variety of projects, promotions, campaigns and programs. Radio and TV time has been purchased, along with newspaper and magazine space. Designers and artists are at work. "Anything you can imagine in a nightmare that idiots would do to celebrate the Bicentennial is being thought of," writes Alistair Cooke. Huge long-term advertising campaigns have been sponsored. Eastman Kodak, for example, has projected an eighteen-month "America" campaign. Interstate Brands of Kansas City will soon "go national" with Dolly Madison stars-and-stripes cupcakes. *Advertising Age* of March 3rd listed nearly a page of such red-white-and-blue promotions. As a rebel group, the People's Bicentennial Commission, pointed out, the anniversary will be seized as "a great excuse to push Spirit of America Chevrolets and John Hancock insurance policies."

And as might be expected, government at all levels has now been caught up in the ferment of activity. The National Park Service will spend \$100 million (over four years) for improvements to twenty-three Bicentennial park areas. The Labor Department is bringing out a

\$75,000 "profusely illustrated" brochure on the history of that forgotten man, the American worker. The Smithsonian Institution will spend \$11 million on thirteen major exhibitions. And so it goes. With the airlines offering special reduced rates, the Bicentennial is expected to attract 30 million international visitors. Local communities such as Concord, Mass. are aghast at the thought of the commotion to come; one headline reads: "Concord Call: 'The Tourists Are Coming.'" Hotels in Washington, D.C. expect a 30 per cent increase in bookings throughout the eighteen-month period. *The Wall Street Journal* quotes one official as saying of Philadelphia: "There will be a twenty-four-hour wait to see the Liberty Bell." The fact that observances will be decentralized, with each community at liberty to celebrate in its own way, has given the Bicentennial a genuine grass-roots quality, in part because of the work of the People's Bicentennial Commission (see article by Robert Karen, *The Nation*, June 29, 1974). "Across the United States," writes Margot Hornblower in *The Washington Post*, "in big cities and small towns, people are writing books, mounting exhibits, restoring houses, re-enacting battles, organizing conferences, planting trees, setting up child-care centers and planning festivals and fireworks, all in honor of the nation's 200th anniversary in 1976." Distasteful, vulgar and crassly commercial as much of this hoopla will be, an awesome significance attaches to the tidal wave of national emotion that will be loosed, whether for good or evil or both. The mind boggles at the volume of rhetoric that will be spouted on patriotic themes between now and December 31, 1976. We will be fortunate if we survive what Madison Avenue has in store for us. All the same, profound national emotions will be stirred which will have short- and long-term consequences of major significance. If we cannot anticipate these consequences—and we cannot—we should be able to draw on past experience to prepare ourselves for the extraordinary binge now getting underway.

By chance, or the workings of some mysterious providence, the Bicentennial, like the Centennial, will occur at a major turning point in our history. The year 1876 was a critical one and 1976 promises to be another, in much the same sense and for many of the same reasons. The parallels can be quickly traced. A backward glance at the Centennial prompts the thought that there is nothing like a wretched backdrop to stimulate interest in a national celebration; the worse the times, the greater the need for diversion and self-congratulation.

• • •

If 1876 did not mark the end, it marked the beginning of the end of the land frontier of the early Republic. A new industrial frontier was emerging, but neither the promise nor the problems of industrialism could be fully sensed at the time. "The challenge," as Duane S. Elgin writes in a recent Stanford Research Institute study, "became mastery of the environment we had usurped in pursuit of material affluence"—with consequences we have only now begun to assess. "Today," writes Elgin, "as concern for the environment increases and we realize the limits of world resources, we are witnessing—symbolically at least—the closing of this second great frontier." Ahead lies a new post-industrial frontier for which we have as

yet no name, and the contours of which we can see no more clearly than another generation could sense what the industrial frontier would bring. But if we cannot see what lies ahead we can ponder the general significance of the national experience from 1876 to 1976. This reassessment should constitute an important element of the Bicentennial exercise.

On March 10, 1876, the first intelligible words—the voice was that of Alexander Graham Bell—were transmitted by telephone, but Americans of that Centennial year were not much impressed by the new gadget and certainly did not foresee what it implied in the way of social changes and industrial expansion. (In 1974, AT&T reported \$73 billion in assets in its annual report to stockholders.) The locomotive, not the telephone, was the symbol of the new industrial frontier. Railroads drew the map of the new urban age. Subsidized by government in a variety of ways, railroad construction assumed fantastic proportions and was one of the factors that precipitated the depression of 1873, from the effects of which the nation had by no means fully recovered by 1876. The great railroad boom played hob with a well-organized and efficient system of barge transportation on rivers and canals and contributed to the decline of the superb maritime shipping industry of an earlier period. Railroad accidents were frequent—they nagged the popular imagination as auto accidents do today—as were fires caused by sparks from locomotives. The nationwide railroad strike of 1877—a major historical event the full significance of which is still not widely sensed—marked, one might say, the birth of the American labor movement. Trade union members numbered perhaps no more than 50,000 in 1876. The shock of the strike and its implications broke old patterns of thought and expectation. "The youth of the American Republic is over," moaned Goldwin Smith, "maturity with its burdens, its difficulties, and its anxieties has come." Substitute the automobile and the truck and the national highway system as symbols for the locomotive and the parallel is striking, if not exact.

In a sense, 1876 was the beginning of a postwar period; the nation was slowly recovering from the long moral sickness of the Civil War. It marked the beginning of the end of a decade of domestic social and political turbulence. In much the same way, 1976 should mark the beginning of the end of more than a decade of bitter division and controversy arising out of the war in Vietnam. As then, so now the nation is burdened with a sense of unacknowledged guilt for thousands of American casualties in a war that foresight, conscience and statesmanship might have avoided.

The year 1876 opened with the first of a year-long series of disclosures of theretofore unprecedented corruption in Washington. In the view of Henry Adams the corruption of the Grant administration "outraged every rule of ordinary decency." Grant's farewell address of December 5, 1876, was an abject apology, like that of another President, in which he said that he had been guilty of "errors of judgment, not intent." The year had opened with high hopes but scandalous disclosures came thick and fast, casting a cloud over the Centennial celebration. That did not, however, dim the enthusiasm ultimately engendered. Indeed enthusiasm for the Cen-

ennial seemed to correlate with the increasing wretchedness of the social and political scene. (By what mystical chance, one wonders, have the Centennial and Bicentennial coincided with humiliating national political scandals?) Corruption had been apparent throughout the two Grant administrations, but in 1876 it became absolute; the administration simply fell apart, as did that of Nixon, who like Grant had been overwhelmingly re-elected.

As a further psychic depressant, a Presidential election was "stolen" in 1876. The campaign had been marked by turbulence and violence; it was a postwar election with sharp divisions and savage tactics. On November 10, Grant closed the Centennial Exhibition; three days before—in the wake of the election—he had ordered federal troops into states and areas where the vote was being canvassed. The outcome remained in doubt until March 5, 1877, when Hayes was finally inaugurated. What it came down to, in a word, was that the Democrats had stolen the popular election but the Republicans had stolen it back in the Electoral College through a recount of disputed returns. In a sense, 1972 marked another "stolen election." The Watergate disclosures prompted more than one demand that a new national election should be ordered and the election itself has been characterized by responsible scholars as a *coup d'état*. Should a third party be launched in 1976, along with the independent candidacy of Eugene McCarthy, we might have still another Presidential election tied up in the Electoral College with the final outcome in doubt for some time. "The hard fact that refused to be ignored in 1876," writes William Peirce Randel, the historian of the Centennial, "was that government of the people, by the people, and for the people, could be manipulated to yield government by a corrupt handful for sordid personal profit. . . . For a year that began with such high hopes, and that so bravely celebrated a hundredth anniversary, it was a dark, inglorious and deferred conclusion. . . . The present was dark, and as for the future, the election held three days before the Exposition closed, blocked out all thought except the big question of which man, and which party, had actually won. Settling that problem was what the future, just then, meant for most Americans." And something like this just might happen in 1976.

The election back then was finally resolved in part because of the famous "compromise" of 1876. Crudely stated, a tacit understanding was reached that federal troops would be withdrawn and "reconstruction" put on the back burner, in exchange for which the Southern Whigs would permit Hayes to take the oath as President. "The radicalism of the Abolitionists before the Civil War had spent its force," writes Randel, "and so had the radicalism of reconstruction; by 1876 the nation had tired of trying to enforce racial equality in the South, and the federal government itself was on the verge of abandoning the effort." This weariness found reflection in a mood of "reconciliation" not unlike the sentiment for "benign neglect" that Presidents Nixon and Ford have voiced. Hayes was not of course renominated—he was programmed to be an "interim" or "caretaker" President—and Gerald Ford may not be nominated in 1976 for much the same reason.

1876 marked a period of splendor, of a sort, and also

of violence. A Gilded Age had emerged; the rich, if less numerous, were as conspicuous as they are today. But the squalor—it was called "the new squalor"—was hideous. The filth of the growing cities was indescribable, as Otto L. Betteman points out in the title of his book: *The Good Old Days: They Were Terrible*. In 1876 Frederick Law Olmsted completed Central Park, in part as an offset to the slum squalor and congestion in such neighborhoods as Kerosene Row, Hell's Kitchen, Bandit's Roost, Bone Alley and Poverty Row. The prevalence of teen-age gangs in San Francisco had given rise in 1876 to the word "hoodlum" which soon spread eastward. "Tramps" and "dime novels" began to attract attention that year. "Violence," writes Robert V. Bruce, "flickered incessantly on every man's horizon." In certain Southern states—Texas was one—lynch law was rampant and in Northern cities "vicarious gore was a breakfast staple," pretty much as it is today. Rail and industrial accidents were commonplace; as one observer noted, "the machine age had begun to munch its victims." At the height of the Centennial fervor came word of the frightful disaster at the Little Bighorn on June 26, 1876, an event which might be paired, symbolically, with the siege of Wounded Knee.

Against this background—not unlike the social scene today; critical transition years produce such phenomena—people seemed to take a special relish in the Centennial celebration as a means of convincing themselves that all was well with the Republic that had been born in 1776. They hugged the theme of material greatness with almost pathetic eagerness. It was a year, as Allan Nevins wrote, to make people ashamed, not proud; but the fact is that the Centennial made them feel ashamed and proud. The Centennial had gotten off to a bad start. Attendance at the Philadelphia grounds increased slowly, declined briefly, and then, for unexplained reasons—perhaps because of the deepening scandals—climbed sharply in September and built toward a smashing finale. By the time the Centennial closed, attendance had topped 8 million—one out of every fifteen Americans had attended, a remarkable figure for that time. This fact alone should jolt us into an awareness of the excitement, interest and enthusiasm that will crest on December 31, 1976.

In retrospect it can be seen why the Centennial was not only an unexpected success but an event of profound national significance. It does not occur to us that there was little sense of American history in 1876. History was not an established discipline; rather it was an avocation of amateurs and gentleman scholars. Henry Adams founded perhaps the first real department of history at Harvard in the 1870s; the American Historical Association was not formed until 1896. American history was little taught in the schools. If the Centennial did nothing else, it convinced Americans that they had a history; it gave them a consciousness of national identity. And this feeling no doubt helped them forget, to some extent, the corruption, scandals and sordidness which were all too evident in the post-Civil War years, and also to face the future with a measure of confidence. Some Americans—Henry Adams was one—were deeply pessimistic; he felt that the system of 1789 had broken down and with it the 18th-century

fabric of moral principles. Reflecting on the impact of the Centennial, William Peirce Randel writes: "If the high hopes and confidence with which the year opened spell a kind of national innocence, their dispersal, under the hammer-blows of scandal, may mark the end of innocence, or at least, of a particular kind of innocence, the Centennial variety." Perhaps. In an afterword to his history which was published in 1969, Mr. Randel wrote: "With the second centennial just ahead, we may expect that the nation will pause again to take stock, and we may wonder how it will seem, these few years from now, not to a Centennial but to a Bicentennial American. Will there be new abuses of power, and will the people be divided? Will there be a Southern Question? Will the arts be more integral a part of our living, religion a vital force for good, and education still in flux? Will we all seek the decent opinion of mankind? The author is haunted by the words of T. H. Huxley, one day in Baltimore [he spoke at Johns Hopkins in 1876] and especially by the phrase which said that our sole safeguard 'is the moral worth and intellectual clearness of the individual citizen.' May this never sound archaic!"

If the generation of Americans of 1876 was for the first time convinced by the Centennial that this country had a history, perhaps the generation of the Bicentennial will want to assess the meaning of the American achievement in the century that has since intervened. The importance of centennial observances—the reason they capture the national imagination—is that they provide a rare chance to focus the attention of the entire nation on questions that should be, but are not, the subject of constant ongoing national debate. Obviously we have a lot to discuss, in these terms, between now and December 31, 1976, but we also have ample time to do it. Is what we have achieved in the last century the measure of our sense of wonder? Is it what we set out to achieve? Is this what we had in mind when we once spoke of the American Dream? Just what have we been doing to earn the decent opinion of mankind since we discovered in 1876 that we had a history?

Well, we have landed men on the moon six times in five years; flown a photographic mission in orbit around Mars for the first time, reached the smallest planet (Mercury) and the largest planet (Jupiter) in the solar system. Let that symbolize our remarkable industrial, scientific, technological achievements. For these achievements we have paid a higher price than we may realize but one that need not be itemized here. We have, since 1876, fought five wars, beginning with the Spanish-American War which launched us on our imperialist course with the annexation of Hawaii and the colonization of Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines; more recently we have staked out a position in Micronesia, the Marianas being our latest acquisition. We have spent uncounted billions to fulfill our self-designated role as the world's policeman. Yet after a quarter of a century we are still mired down in a cold war, committed to a \$90-billion defense budget, with no end in sight and with a tarnished national image in many parts of the world. The economy is grossly distorted, welfare capitalism is faced with a major crisis, and yet, with perhaps 9 or 10 per cent unemployment and a high rate of inflation, we have reached out to establish

military bases in the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. Obviously, we have much to discuss if we are to take advantage of this unique opportunity to assess the history of the last hundred years. Such a discussion would not be academic. As E. H. Carr recently reminded us: "History is past politics and politics present history." It is hard to believe, therefore, that the Bicentennial ballyhoo, though incessant and deafening, can prevent us (or some of us) from conducting a dialogue on American history 1876-1976 which must necessarily have an impact on next year's election. "As we move toward our Centennial-Bicentennial year," Colorado's Gov. Richard D. Lamm said recently, "let us re-examine what it means to be Americans. The value of being an American is not measured by having two cars in every garage and a color television set. Our progress as a people cannot be measured by garbage compactors, B-1 bombers and plastic flowers. It is measured by our continued right to live and work in equality and freedom, being judged only on our ability. Our country is great not because we have great leaders but because we have a great people, people who overcame adversity, poverty, prejudice and handicaps of all kinds. We will solve today's problems only if we meld the best ideas from our diverse communities into the solutions we attempt. We need the support, the ideas and the participation of everyone."

But we also need to re-examine our history as a people at a deeper and more significant level. "With a neatness history seldom offers," writes John E. Sawyer, the economic historian (*The New York Times*, December 30, 1974), "the era now ending can be said to have begun five centuries ago with the great geographical explorations that opened the way to the outpouring of energies, ideas and institutions of Western Europe." When American history is viewed as part of this process and not as a separate miraculous episode, it takes on aspects and dimensions and meanings that the history texts of the last generation did not stress. We need to realize that this long span of history has come to a fundamental turning point or, as Maurice Strong, the Canadian executive director of the U.N. environment program, said recently, "a crunch point." Seen in this perspective we should be able to attain a more realistic view of ourselves and of our history and our politics. It would help us to see more clearly where we stand. It might enable us to disenthral our historical imagination; it should help us through the painful process of waking up from the American bad dream ("Waking from the American Dream" by George P. Elliott, *The Nation*, November 16, 1974). It should enable us also to understand Scott Fitzgerald's warning about "the green light, the orgiastic future, that year by year recedes before us." At their best, our better poets have always known that while there was much to celebrate about the American experience it had a darker side, for the individual and for society. "At the same time that we have seized and occupied our continent," writes Robert Penn Warren (*The New York Review of Books*, March 30, 1975), "our poets have explored the crisis of the American spirit grappling with its destiny. They have faced, sometimes unconsciously, the tragic ambiguity of the fact that the spirit of the nation we had promised to create had often been the victim of our astonishing objec-

tive success, and that, in our success, we have put at pawn the very essence of the nation we had promised to create—that essence being the concept of the free man, the responsible self.”

If 1876 convinced us that we had a history, perhaps the more thoughtful of the Bicentennial observances will establish the need to re-evaluate that history, particularly

for the period from 1876 to 1976, and the politics it has spawned.

(Note: Highly recommended as sources: *Centennial: American Life in 1876* by William Peirce Randel, 1969, Chilton Book Co., and *1876: Year of Violence* by Robert V. Bruce, The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1959—a volume that should be re-issued if it is out of print.)

‘WHERE THERE IS NO VISION...’ Vladivostok Arms Race

DORON BAR-LEVAV

Despite the furore over the arms accord recently concluded between the United States and the Soviet Union, one essential point has been missed. Critics as well as supporters have been arguing about force levels and costs and whether “we gave away too much to the Russians.” No one, however, seems to have asked the real question: does the United States need strategic arms limitation agreements at all? The answer appears to be no.

The Vladivostok accords provide for quantitative equalization of force levels. Each side will be permitted to have 2,400 launchers—1,320 of which may be MIRVed—and there can be a free mix within both strategic forces, that is, the new agreement will allow unrestricted allocation of the 2,400 launchers among bombers, land-based Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) and Submarine Launched Ballistic Missiles (SLBMs).

The United States now has 2,206 launchers, composed of 656 SLBMs, 1,054 ICBMs and 496 bombers. (Some press reports have it that the seventy-six FB-111s are *not* included but that about 200 mothballed B-52s are, for a total of about 600 bombers.) Under the new agreement, the United States will be permitted to add 194 launchers. The USSR has 2,393 launchers, the current mix being 666 SLBMs, 1,587 ICBMs and 140 bombers. Russia, therefore, can build only seven more launchers, a fact which may help explain how the figure of 2,400 was derived.

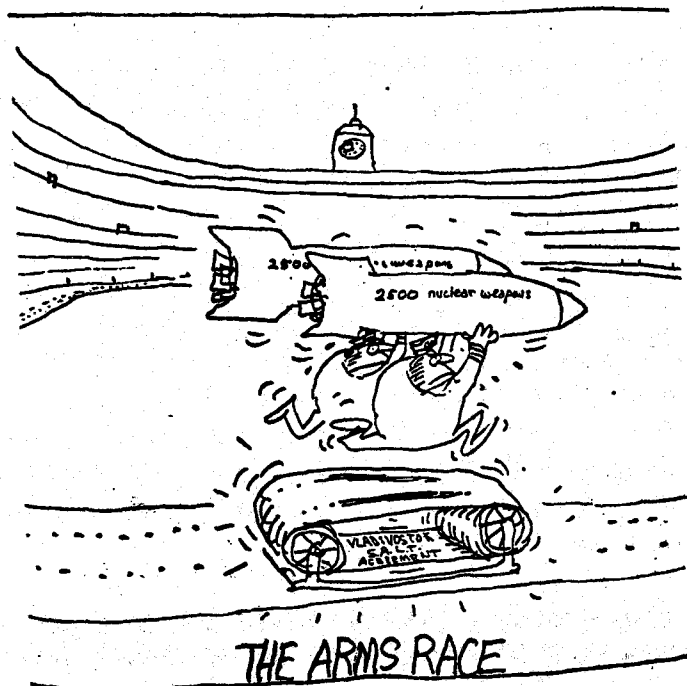
The United States now has a three-to-one advantage in nuclear weapons—8,500 to 2,800. Furthermore, 820 of the American launchers are already MIRVed, while Russia may have only begun to deploy its MIRVs.

These figures show, but do not say explicitly, that both sides have more than enough firepower to lay waste the world. The United States is estimated to have 4,456 megaton equivalents of TNT stockpiled, compared to 3,847 for the Soviet Union. This works out, on a per capita basis, to 36,292 pounds of TNT targeted on every American and 36,375 pounds hanging over the head of every Russian. The figures are based on the concept of equivalent megatonnage, derived from a law of nuclear physics. Warheads larger than a megaton will produce explosions

of greater than a megaton but less than the actual raw megatonnage figure. Thus a 5-megaton warhead is not five times as powerful as a 1-megaton warhead.

Both countries have too much; both, however, may be contemplating increases. As Herbert Scoville, former Deputy Director of the CIA, recently remarked, the Vladivostok agreement made the “ceiling” so high that it is, in effect, no limitation at all. Indications are that the United States will view the “ceiling” not as a maximum that need not be reached but as a “floor” for possible increases once the agreement runs out in 1985.

What is even more perplexing is the focus of attention the accords are getting in the press. Almost every article seems to develop the theme that we gave up too much and have, therefore, made ourselves more vulnerable to a Soviet first strike. That is crazy. The whole concept of first-strike capability is a reflection of the 1950s mentality when a first strike was a real option. The situation is entirely different today. Twenty years ago we had a



Perry, The Australian (Sydney)

THE NATION/April 12, 1975

"jump" on the USSR in nuclear development. But once both countries had reached a certain level of weapons, in absolute numbers, numerical advantages were of decreasing importance. One might characterize the last decade as the arms race of diminishing returns.

The present high level of nuclear weapons also points out that it is a country's second-strike, not its first-strike, capability that deters. Unless one side has perfected an extremely accurate delivery system, it cannot rationally contemplate a first strike even against ICBMs for fear of "missing" a few of them. Neither the United States nor the Soviet Union possesses that kind of precision today.

More important, the term first-strike capability is bandied about today in a way to reveal a complete lack of understanding as to how and why deterrence works. The purpose of the United States' Triad system (bombers, land-based missiles and submarines) and the Soviet Union's Dyad system (land-based missiles and submarines) is by diversity to assure the invulnerability of their retaliatory capabilities. Thus, even if Russia were to strike first and succeeded in destroying every missile silo (a most unlikely event), the United States could still retaliate with bombers and submarines which are, for the most part, invulnerable. Furthermore, the possession of an actual first-strike capability does not signify that it will be exploited; the United States had such a capability in the 1950s against the Soviet Union, and the United States, and perhaps the Soviet Union, have it now against the People's Republic of China.

The most disturbing aspect of the Vladivostok accords

is that they allow for increases instead of decreases in arms levels. The time for reduction is now, not in 1985, since the Russian missiles are old and rapidly becoming obsolete. By 1985 the Soviets will have deployed three new types of missiles and, given time and money committed to those systems, will be far less amenable to arms reductions than at present. What the United States should attempt to do, then, is exploit the fact that the Soviet Union is at a strategic juncture and persuade Moscow simply to retire old missiles rather than replace them.

Is there no utility to bilateral strategic agreements? The answer is, very little. Deterrence is mostly a psychological matter, involving perceptions and intentions. If it makes people feel better to have strategic arms limitation agreements, then by all means let there be a continued positive emphasis on them. But the United States *need not add even one missile* to its complement. Let the Soviet Union build as many weapons as it desires within the arms control agreements. There is not a single reason for trying to stay ahead or even to keep up.

Not only would the United States be saving large sums of money that could be diverted to the civilian sector, but a basis of proof would be quickly established that would demonstrate to Moscow that we are indeed truly interested in meaningful arms control. But most important, by forgoing competition in a strategic arms race, the United States would not be jeopardizing its security interests in the least. America can have the same deterrent capability with fewer arms. Enough is exactly enough. □

Pentagon Shell Game

ROBERT C. ALDRIDGE

After the Vladivostok summit agreement was announced last November, Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger intimated that some upward adjustment in defense spending could be expected. Although at odds with what was then the Administration's image of restraint, the seriousness of his warning recently became apparent. His budget request for fiscal 1976 exceeded the \$100 billion mark for the first time in history.

At last year's budget hearings Secretary Schlesinger quoted from Proverbs that "where there is no vision the people perish." He then proceeded to demonstrate his own vision by openly launching this country into a counterforce policy—an offensive posture that had been meticulously avoided for decades because of its dangerous potential. Through a new targeting strategy he is now developing a strike capability of surgical precision that makes nuclear exchanges possible. And he is providing the weapons for those genocidal encounters: continued development of a

Robert Aldridge is a free-lance writer and former aerospace engineer who has worked on five generations of sea-based missile systems. Now a critic of the arms race, his articles have appeared in Sign, The Christian Century and The Nation.

super-bomber force which can spew cruising missiles at every target in the Communist world; development of a new submarine/missile combination, plus research on a new strategic missile to be launched from the torpedo tube of any submarine, and intensive study of mobile missiles to replace land-based ICBMs during the next decade. The list goes on—laser death rays, homing re-entry bodies, remotely piloted aircraft, hydrofoil missile ships, etc.

This year, facing a Congress even more reluctant to increase military spending, Secretary Schlesinger used a different quotation: "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace." Departing from the Biblical image of harmony, he now has appealed to the paranoid security which obsesses the affluent and has unwittingly acknowledged that protection of U.S. business ventures is the primary function of today's military. "We live in an interdependent world economy," he continued, "and our foreign economic interests are substantial. U.S. assets abroad amount to \$180 billion. . . . The oil embargo of 1973 is only the most recent and pointed reminder that we have a keen and growing interest in distant lands—their markets and their products." He then pointed to the many trouble spots in the world (mostly fueled by U.S. arms sales) where policies still remain to be formulated.

He advanced the classic threat to U.S. military superiority: Russia's work on four new-generation missiles, even within the constraint of Vladivostok, he claims, "will give the Soviets a much more powerful strategic force." Secretary Schlesinger fails, however, to mention that Russian advances have always been in response to a U.S. technological lead. Now he wants to extend that lead and touch off even more volatile Soviet reactions.

A provision of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 requires federal agencies to anticipate their monetary needs five years in advance. The Pentagon's forecast bears out Schlesinger's upward adjustment prediction remarkably well:

FY 1976	\$104.7 billion
FY 1977	\$116.6 billion
FY 1978	\$127.8 billion
FY 1979	\$138.3 billion
FY 1980	\$147.9 billion

But, as Schlesinger pointed out, the 1976 request is based on the President's proposal to hold federal pay raises and retiree cost-of-living increases to 5 per cent and it assumes enactment of legislation that will allow the DOD to acquire receipts from oil production at Elk Hills. If Congress fails to comply, the 1976 budget will rise by another \$2.2 billion. Estimates for 1977 through 1980 are even more dependent on revenues from federal petroleum reserves and limitations on pay and price increases.

Contradicting his statement that budget projections assume certain inflation controls, the Defense Secretary then pointed out that the 41 per cent increase of fiscal 1980 over 1976 does reflect inflation. To understand

exactly how those figures redirect the trend in military spending requires only an analysis of the actual spending pattern over a comparable period. The increase from \$75 billion in 1971 to \$89 billion this year is 18.7 per cent; even with inflation, the annual expenditure rise of the past was less than half what the military is asking for in coming years. It seems incredible that an arms limitation agreement can be an excuse to stimulate weapons development.

One reason that legislators hesitate to make realistic cuts in defense spending is their fear of jeopardizing jobs back home. Poorly informed members of Congress might actually believe that pumping more money into military contracting would ease the unemployment crisis. But if they were to examine the defense job market, they would recognize a declining curve. The following statistics come from the Defense Department:

<i>Fiscal Year</i>	<i>Defense Budget</i>	<i>Defense Contracting Jobs</i>
1968	\$ 75 billion	3,173,000
1974	\$ 85 billion	1,665,000
1975	\$ 89 billion	1,494,000
1976 (planned)	\$104.7 billion	1,469,000

It is obvious that the climbing defense budget provides diminishing employment. If those dollars were channeled into areas of health, housing, education, public works and community services they would create almost twice as many jobs. But until Congress recognizes the need for a peace economy, the Defense Department will continue to consume a disproportionate share of the tax dollar, while inflation and unemployment persist. □

VORSTER AND KAUNDA

STRANGE AFRICAN BEDFELLOWS

LARRY BOWMAN

"Rhodesia is a country where much seems to happen but nothing seems to change." I remembered that sentence, which I had written in 1972 for the chapter concluding my book on Rhodesia, as I reflected recently on the surprising Rhodesian developments of December 1974, and then realized that it was now April and things still looked much as they always had.

Later this year it will be a full decade since Prime Minister Ian Douglas Smith and his Rhodesian Front Party announced their unilateral declaration of independence (UDI). However anachronistic it might have seemed at the time for this tiny group of white settlers to thumb their noses at Africa and the world, the fact remains that they got away with it. Despite South Africa's displeasure and the overwhelming racial odds within Rhodesia

Larry Bowman, an associate professor of political science at the University of Connecticut, is the author of Politics in Rhodesia: White Power in an African State (Harvard University Press).

(twenty Africans for each white), Smith and his followers read their options correctly. South Africa would help if the costs were low; Great Britain and its Western allies would posture indignantly but do little; and the level of internal repression would be sufficient to keep the Africans in check. Nor would the economic sanctions voted by the United Nations be a serious threat. On paper they were harsh, but they would be applied and supported with considerable indifference. Thus Smith and the Rhodesian Front carved out a bit of time for themselves to sustain their substantial privileges (or, as they would have it, to defend Western civilization). Yet events are beginning to overtake the white Rhodesians and the question now is how much longer they can stay in power.

Two developments have brought the Rhodesian issue back into the news and raised the possibility of political change. The first is the growing ability of the liberation movement ZANU (Zimbabwe African National Union) to sustain a military presence in northeastern Rhodesia which Smith's army has been unable to dislodge, even with South African police support. The second is the

shock felt throughout Southern Africa as the ramifications of the April 1974 coup in Portugal became evident. Taken together, these developments—persisting violence within Rhodesia and changing political realities within Southern Africa—have imposed a new and heavy broad pressure for settlement of the Rhodesian independence issue.

When it became apparent after the coup that Lisbon would quickly give independence to its African colonies, all the old Southern African equations were immediately altered. South Africa realized that the tier of white-governed states to its north was in jeopardy. Once intervention on behalf of the white settlers in Mozambique was ruled out, the importance of sustaining white Rhodesia in the name of South African security was lessened. Since South Africa was obliged to accept black African rule on its doorstep in Lourenço Marques, a whole series of new developments unfolded with respect to Rhodesia.

The most interesting and important of these was the working together of Prime Minister Vorster of South Africa with President Kaunda of Zambia in an attempt to find some solution to the Rhodesian question. These northern and southern neighbors of Rhodesia had obvious reasons to work together, despite long-standing racial differences. For South Africa, its security strategy in the aftermath of the Portuguese coup has focused on closer ties with the United States and other major Western nations and on an increased effort to improve dialogue and reach détente with black-run Africa. And the “cost” of increased Western support and a rational dialogue with black Africa seemed to be greater flexibility on both the Rhodesian and Namibian (South-West African) issues. For Zambia, the compelling motive for working with South Africa appears to have been its fear of being drawn into a long guerrilla struggle over Rhodesia. That would be particularly alarming for Zambia because of its difficult transport problems with respect to copper export and its own reluctance to be the base for an extended insurgency. Indeed, the threat that South African military forces could pose to major Zambian industrial, transport and electrical installations may well have swayed Kaunda to push for negotiations.

The leverage that Kaunda and Vorster can exert on contending Rhodesian groups appears imposing on the surface. South Africa provides white Rhodesia with the economic assistance needed to forestall the effect of sanctions, furnishes Rhodesia with its only secure link to the outside world, and serves psychologically and militarily as an imposing ally in support of Rhodesian resistance. Kaunda and Zambia have provided support for Rhodesia's exiled African nationalist groups: ZANU, ZAPU (Zimbabwe African Peoples Union) and FROLIZI (Front for the Liberation of Zimbabwe). Only with Zambian support have ZANU and ZAPU been able to mount military attacks within Rhodesia. Without such aid, the prospects for the liberation struggle within Rhodesia are slim, at least until Mozambique becomes independent in June, and even then co-ordination from that quarter is by no means assured.

The negotiations between Vorster and Kaunda led,

in December, to a series of unforeseen developments. Joshua Nkomo of ZAPU and the Rev. Ndabaningi Sithole of ZANU were released from Rhodesian jails to meet in Lusaka, Zambia, with Kaunda, Presidents Nyerere of Tanzania and Khama of Botswana, Samora Machel, President of the African guerrilla organization FRELIMO, and the future head of Mozambique, Bishop Abel Musorewa of the still legal African National Council (ANC) of Rhodesia, and their exiled colleagues. The result of their discussions was an agreement to unify the long split Rhodesian African nationalism under the interim leadership of Bishop Musorewa and the ANC.

Vorster's ability to force Smith to force important nationalist leaders for discussions outside Rhodesia (and some have remained free) and of Kaunda to force unity upon the long fragmented Rhodesian Africans has been, to date, the major achievement of the Vorster-Kaunda program for détente and a peaceful solution to the Rhodesian situation. Since December there has been backsliding on all fronts.

Several events were expected to follow from the December developments. There was talk of a cease-fire in the northeast in exchange for a constitutional conference which would pave the way for political change. It was further thought that all political prisoners would be released. Now, four months later, the whole situation is clouded and none of the expected developments has emerged. ZANU continues to press its military struggle in the northeast, while Smith and the Africans argue whether there should be a cease-fire in place (the African contention) or a withdrawal of troops (as Smith insists). There has been only a partial release of political prisoners and detainees, and Sithole was rearrested in early March. Limited negotiations have been held between the ANC and the Smith government, but they have made no apparent progress toward setting a date for the constitutional conference. Indeed, the possibility of such a conference, let alone the hope that it would produce useful results, is increasingly in doubt. What happened?

The critical fact is that the momentum engendered by Vorster and Kaunda faltered once the contending Rhodesians came face to face. Among Rhodesians, white and black, the desire for a settlement, and especially for “any” settlement, is not nearly as compelling as it is for their uneasy neighbors. Kaunda and Vorster could now probably agree on an African leader for Rhodesia and on an acceptable timetable for the transfer of power, but that does not make either prospect palatable to those Rhodesians, white or black, who fear they might not come out on top. Therein lies the perpetual intractability of the whole Rhodesian situation.

On the African side, the unity agreement is held together by a thread. ZANU, the dominant military faction, remains an unyielding proponent of immediate majority rule and is unlikely to agree to a cease-fire until Smith accepts his own ouster. ZANU maintains its enduring opposition to Nkomo of ZAPU as a leader, and of course is in basic disagreement with the ANC on the issue of armed struggle versus nonviolent change. ZAPU at the center and the ANC on the right are probably willing to negotiate with Smith for a fairly rapid phased transition

to African rule. Yet the prerequisite of African "unity" for meaningful talks with Smith and the doubt that Smith really means to talk seriously about a transfer of power make the African position unstable.

The whites obviously hope that African differences can be exploited to obtain the best agreement possible from the most conservative African faction. Sithole's new imprisonment is evidence of white Rhodesia's desire to exclude ZANU, the most militant African group, from any future negotiations. Yet even so, it is far from clear that Smith and the Front are prepared to offer terms that even the ANC would accept. It may well be that South Africa is thinking in terms of a five- to six-year transition period, but Smith has said nothing that remotely resembles it. As yet, no agreement has been reached about the role that Britain might play in any constitutional conference. The Africans want British involvement, but white Rhodesia and South Africa see Britain as doing little more than endorse any agreement Smith can get some group of Africans to accept. Finally, it is by no means apparent that Smith and the Front would countenance *any* agreement. Vorster's new interest in a conservative African regime is far from convincing to Smith and his followers, who surely realize that any African government in Rhodesia must threaten their privileged position. All this means that there is no cease-fire, no date for a constitutional conference, continued imprisonment for many political prisoners, and a growing probability that a negotiated settlement between white and black in Rhodesia is as unlikely as ever.

As has often been the case throughout the eighty-five years of white-black relations in Rhodesia, local realities thwart the will of outside interests. Primary today is the fact that the two dominant local forces—Smith and the settlers and ZANU and its guerrilla army—are un-

willing to settle on terms that each does not more or less control. The Front wants, at the least, an extended time frame for a transfer of power; ZANU wants an immediate unconditional transfer. Each has a vested interest in rejecting compromise now in the hope that eventually its own view is more likely to prevail.

For Smith—a master of obfuscation and prevarication—the pressure to settle is not as great as the potential wait-and-see. Sanctions hurt but can be endured. South Africa's views have great weight, but white Rhodesia banks on the fact—as with UDI in the past—that the South African Government will not dare to be seen by its own constituency as forcing a black government down the throats of fellow whites.

A bit more wait-and-see also suits ZANU and the more militant Africans. A compromise now would inevitably give more authority and power to Musorewa and Nkomo than ZANU feels their contributions to the struggle entitle them. Any cease-fire—either in place or as a withdrawal—would undercut ZANU influence. In addition, the militants appear willing to wait until June to see what an independent Mozambique will do. The pressures on Machel and the new Mozambique leadership over a host of Southern African questions are already intense, but ZANU gambles that FRELIMO's revolutionary commitment will override its desire for a regional "stability" that includes a white-dominated or neocolonial black government in Rhodesia.

It seems to me that the basic question in Rhodesia is whether the revolutionary process will be allowed to develop as it did in the Portuguese colonies or be truncated as it has been almost everywhere else in Africa. If revolution continues, South Africa will eventually face a formidable challenge from black Africa. If it does not, détente and dialogue will proceed and, at least for some considerable time, South Africa will be able to dominate



Oliphant, The Denver Post

the southern third of the continent on behalf of its Western allies. The pressures for a conservative solution are greater than those for the revolutionary alternative. The irony of the contemporary situation is that white Rhodesia's intransigence offers the best prospect for radical change in Rhodesia and a serious challenge to South

Africa. If for no other reason, that is why Vorster is slowly putting the squeeze on Smith. The question being begged in all of this, however, is just how black Africa will finally face up to the situation in apartheid South Africa. Rhodesia is but a prelude to this much larger and more difficult problem. □

FEAR OF GENERALS

MAUREEN MYLANDER

The generals in Fletcher Knebel's *Seven Days in May* rendezvoused in the northern Virginia countryside. They set up a desert base in Texas where 3,500 troops were trained to seize civilian communication facilities in Chicago, New York, Los Angeles and Utah. The generals conspired to overthrow the government of the United States to prevent a nuclear disarmament treaty from taking effect. Only an alert Marine Corps colonel, who in turn alerted the President, saved the country from a military coup. The generals in *Seven Days in May* were not very nice people and, even in fictional garb, they scared us.

When I started out to write a book about army generals several years ago, I too was frightened, perhaps by the ghosts of *Seven Days*. The fears became a fantasy, which later I set down:

I would be kept waiting in an outer office half an hour or longer. An aide would then usher me into a long, rectangular room with thick carpeting, mahogany-paneled walls and a massive walnut desk at the far end. Behind that desk would be a row of flags and—the General. He would not look up, but would continue reading a solitary page (an investigative report on my background, perhaps) while I stood waiting on the far side of the desk. Finally he would look up, irritated, and ask what I wanted. The interview would go downhill from there.

The vision proved false. Most of the fifty generals I interviewed were, if not open-armed, at least polite. I never stood at attention before a massive walnut desk, never waded through deep-pile carpeting. Most of the generals' offices were rather cramped, and a few in the Pentagon had no windows. My most dangerous encounter occurred in Fort Hood, Texas, with a three-star general who looked disconcertingly like my late father, an army colonel. The general repeatedly slapped his palm with a dagger-like letter opener during the first forty-five minutes of the interview. Finally, to my relief, he laid it down and began fiddling with a paper clip.

One colonel compares the vibrations a general triggers to those that Dorothy and her friends felt as they traveled the Yellow Brick Road and stood before the Wizard of Oz: the Tin Woodsman's knees rattled, the Lion cried and the Scarecrow become completely unglued. The same phenomenon occurs daily in the Pentagon, in officers' clubs, at West Point and the Army War College, at Forts

Ord, Hood, Carson, Leavenworth, Benning or any of the hundreds of other places where generals gather. The problem, according to the American Heritage Dictionary's definition of fear, is "Extreme reverence or awe, as toward a supreme power."

It took me some time to discover that beneath the façade of "supreme power," generals themselves act more like frightened little boys than the conspiratorial heavies of *Seven Days in May*. Afraid of what? Publicity, for one thing. And outspokenness, controversy, generals with more stars and civilians with titles like Assistant Secretary of Defense. Those bosses, even on a whim, can pack a hapless general off to Camp Swampy where, like General Halftrack, he will wait month after month for the message the Pentagon will never send. Ultimately, he will fade into retirement where—under Title 10, Section 888 of the U.S. Code, threat of court-martial and loss of retirement pay—he will be forbidden to use "contemptuous words" in speech or print against the President, Vice President, Congress, Secretary of Defense, secretary of a military department, Secretary of the Treasury, or the governor or legislature of any state. (Presumably retired generals may criticize the Secretary of State, Secretary of Interior and Supreme Court Justices.)

To examine at its source the fear that generals inspire, an imaginary surgeon must trepan the collective brow of the officer corps whence generals spring. The first thing one finds inside those heads is a great empty space which should be crammed with knowledge about generals but is not. Although little information is available to outsiders (a situation I expected), even less is available to insiders. Particularly in the Army—my target because it is the largest, oldest and, in recent years, most visible service—the few existing studies would fit within a single briefcase. These include some memoirs by famous generals, and romanticized trait analyses by authors who like to portray generals as "men with steel in their souls." And the Army has generated valuable raw data about some recently retired three- and four-star generals through an oral history project at the U.S. Army Military History Research Collection, Carlisle Barracks, Pa.

On the other hand:

¶Across the street from the Research Collection stands the Army War College. This finishing school for future generals did not even teach generalship until 1973, when it offered a course lasting *three hours* (divided equally between guest lecture and seminar).

¶The War College recently produced a series of leader-

ship monographs, covering officer grades through colonel, but stopping just short of general.

¶At the same school some potentially invaluable tapes were made in 1971, when officers interviewed fifty active-duty army generals about their leadership experiences and opinions. Nobody got around to analyzing these tapes in detail and eventually they were erased, presumably because someone thought they were too sensitive to be left sitting on the shelves.

¶Not even the Army's General Officer Management Office in the Pentagon—which guards generals' personnel records in gray metal file cabinets with combination locks—could, or would, produce information for outsiders, or insiders, for that matter, about such topics as the jobs generals do, their previous branch of service or their retirement rates.

The message, to professional soldiers and to the world, is clear: *Do Not Criticize Generals. Do Not Even Look at Generals. Be Afraid.*

Still, something more basic than ignorance fosters the atmosphere. Officers fear generals because they fear failure. The army career system institutionalizes the attitude because generals ultimately decide whether or not an officer gets promoted. If he is passed over, he must resign or retire, dreaded alternatives since military skills are hard to sell in the civilian job market. Even officers—and there are many—who care more about doing a good job than wearing a star are not exempt: they must meet the promotion schedule or get squeezed between the pincers of the "up-or-out" policy.

This was the brainchild of officers who remembered with horror the pre-World War II days of mounted drill, tent-peg alignment, small budgets and agonizingly slow advancement. In 1947, Congress passed the Officer Personnel Act, which guaranteed that henceforth promotions would be rapid and regular and—by a series of complex legalisms—that military manpower would swell to a size unprecedented in peacetime.

The larger the officer corps, the smaller the chances that a Patton, Marshall or Eisenhower could succeed on reputation alone. A good written record became essential because promotion boards no longer judged the man, but pieces of paper representing the man. The result was careerism: an oft-obsessive preoccupation with combat medals, master's degrees, key assignments, early promotions and similar credentials which set a man above his peers.

As the collective concern of the officer corps turned toward advancement, "the system" worked to keep that concern alive. Uniforms, for example, are the most visible barometers of success. First the eye scans the shoulder for bars, leaves, wings or stars signifying rank, then skips to the chest for patches, pins, badges, medals, ribbons and other marks of achievement. A fully festooned four-star general might display six rows of ribbons over his heart.

Hidden from public view, but not from the eyes of a constantly changing cast of colleagues assigned to the Army's personnel center, is the personnel file. This dossier measures several inches thick by the time an officer attains colonel's rank. Inside are listings of previous assignments, academic transcripts, citations, letters of commen-

dation, full-body photograph, and special markers signaling anything unusual, from pending court-martial to the magic: "Recommended for Command."

The Officer Efficiency Report outranks everything else in the file. This series of narrative and check-list evaluations by each man's boss and bosses' boss covers every officer up to and including two-star general. The reports relentlessly probe every facet of official performance, plus the more delicate fabric of personal life: unpaid debts, excessive drinking, community consciousness, social gaucherie, wifely indiscretions and, in recent years, anti-war politics. By the time the brigadier general board meets, an aspiring colonel has collected about forty such "report cards," covering each year of service and every assignment, no matter how brief.

Perhaps the most remarkable thing about the efficiency report is its utter worthlessness as an aid to selection. The very wording invites this outcome. Officers are rated as (check one): inadequate, marginal, effective, *excellent, superior, outstanding*. The reports might work were raters not so generous, but the urge to give near-perfect ratings is historical. In 1903 a regimental commander wrote the following appraisal of Capt. John J. Pershing: "I haven't seen this officer since 1889 but I have every reason to believe that he is doing the fine kind of job he was doing for me when I last saw him."

A more standardized efficiency report evolved during the early 1920s. In World War II, when the War Department needed 150 generals to lead ground troops, Gen. George C. Marshall's staff culled the efficiency reports for the top contenders and learned that of 4,000 eligible officers, 2,000 were "superior." The general was forced to rely, as had his predecessors, upon his "little black book." In January 1973 the Army unveiled its seventh efficiency report form since World War II, heralding it as the elixir that would cure all previous ills. By March 1973, Chief of Staff Gen. Creighton Abrams complained publicly that the reports he was receiving were "inflated beyond any reasonable expectation." Revision number eight is now underway.

Meanwhile, when a promotion board meets to select brigadier generals, it quickly eliminates candidates with less-than-maximum scores. Perfect reports are a precondition, not a guarantee of selection. And too often perfection lies in pleasing the boss, making him look good and—given human nature—agreeing with him. Everything hinges upon his sense of fairness, his tolerance of dissent, his forgiveness of error, his whims and vendettas; sometimes little more than his skill in writing a good narrative for the report makes the difference.

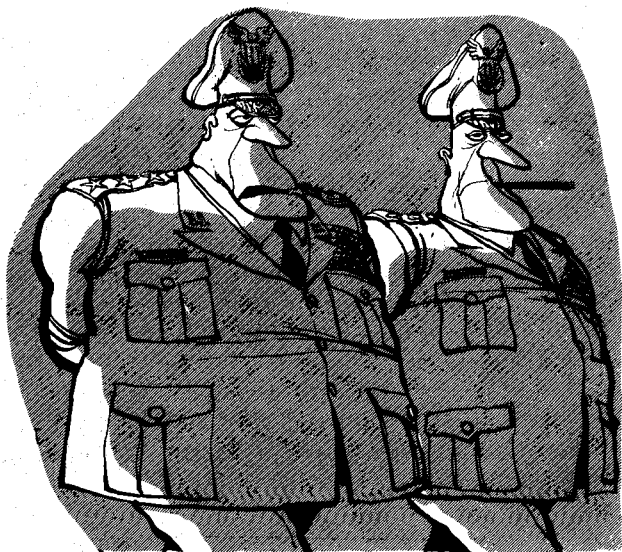
How do officers view efficiency reports? A colonel who commanded a brigade at Fort Carson several years ago asked his subordinates this question. Those planning to resign were indifferent to their ratings, but the careerists, the colonel said, "were terrified of their efficiency reports. So I told all my commanders that the next time around I would give them top scores. I wanted to remove that sword from over their heads."

Swords, especially when dangled over heads, tax courage. At the simplest level, this translates into unwillingness to call generals "generals." They are, instead, rever-

entially mentioned as "senior officers," "top military managers" or, in moments of unusual candor, "general officers." The term "old man" and "the general" are reserved for conversations among friends. One veteran Pentagon official avoids mentioning the word "general" during briefings because he believes it is so emotion-laden as to distract his audience.

The dangling sword also causes overreaction to a general's every word, gesture, frown. A casual observation becomes an order, a general's comment that a large oak tree blocks his view of the duck pond causes the tree's immediate removal (which was not what the general had in mind). Or the word goes out: "The General didn't like those charts" (actually, he never even saw them). Or the White House, with great fanfare, sends a rush request to the West Point library for a certain book (needed by some general in residence to complete a crossword puzzle).

About ten years ago, when he was inspecting some troops, Army Chief of Staff Gen. Harold K. Johnson noticed one soldier with a hole in his T-shirt. "That's unsightly," Johnson told a member of his entourage. Before



Oliphant, *The Denver Post*

long, an Army-wide message ordered that T-shirts would no longer be visible in the neck of fatigue jackets, shirts or other work uniforms worn without necktie. The response was overwhelming. Soldiers cut the necks out of their T-shirts, tugged them down in the front, or stopped wearing them altogether. About a month later, PXs began selling T-shirts with V-necks.

On a far more serious scale, deference to generals turns officers into moral eunuchs. A chaplain at the Army War College recently observed that the pragmatism of the professional soldier, the "if-it-works-it's-right" attitude, tends to breed ethical relativism and misplaced loyalty to the boss. The attitude explains why false body counts, phony medal citations, massacres and cover-ups of massacres plagued the Army in Vietnam and shocked a naive public. Less publicized, but far more damning, were the Army's subsequent indictments of itself in two internal studies of

professionalism and leadership. The former, conducted in 1970, traced the disintegration of the Army's professional and ethical climate and warned that the situation could be self-perpetuating because "young, idealistic energetic officers . . . leave the service and are replaced by those who will tolerate if not condone ethical imperfection. . . ." A year later the leadership study documented breakdowns in leadership at all levels, from junior enlisted men to generals. Both reports portrayed an officer corps beset by conformity, selfishness and moral relativism.

From this pool of fearful, conforming men, generals are selected. Some ambitious officers rationalize their conformity by suppressing their ideas and opinions so that they can rise to the top and then change the system. B. H. Liddell Hart, military strategist and author, once described what happens then: "Unfortunately, the usual result, after years of such self-repression for the sake of their ambition, was that when the bottle was eventually uncorked the contents had evaporated."

But suppose, for argument's sake, that the contents remain intact, that an officer manages to climb the ladder without jettisoning his principles along the way. What happens then? The neophyte general enters, as those below see it, a brave new world inhabited by the mighty. In reality, the new system resembles the old, only more so. The new general, like his underlings, faces a long bout of job hopping. The assignments of recent army generals average slightly less than sixteen months. For generals commanding troops (about one-quarter of the total 475 army generals), average time in job is about thirteen months. This jumping about allows a general little time to know his men, master his job or take responsibility for his actions. In contrast, corporate presidents, according to the latest Heidrick and Struggles survey of 500 top U.S. companies, spend four to five years on the job.

During his brief tenure, what does the general actually do? The Army has never released any time-and-motion studies, probably because they would reveal too much time devoted to trips, conferences, briefings, VIP visits, social functions, ceremonies, parades, tree plantings, ribbon snippings. Generals assigned to troops, schools and the Pentagon bear an extreme measure of these burdens. One Army War College commandant, who often entertained or was entertained seventeen nights in a row, told me, "I am not the cocktail party type." But entertaining was a prime requirement of his job. Pentagon generals plug into the Washington social circuit and often attend three or four parties a week, sometimes several per night. The pace is exhausting, even for a battle-hardened veteran. One general recalls being asked to persuade a colleague, who habitually dozed off during briefings, to go to Walter Reed Army hospital for a complete checkup.

Misassignment places another burden on generals. It is, in part, the legacy of the post-World War II technological boom which broadened and complicated military tasks. Professional soldiers have, for nearly three decades, agonized over what role they should play: specialist? military diplomat? soldier-scholar? technocrat? bureaucrat? heroic warrior? Rather than choose, they have assumed all these roles, being thus in conformity with the literal meaning of "general": someone who knows something about every-

thing. That did not seem such an impossible task back when the most complex weapon in the arsenal was a single-engine aircraft. The problem now is that generalists know less and less about more and more, as demands for expertise increase. Still, the Army assigns officers who have led infantry units throughout their careers to head organizations like the Army Materiel Command, a vast logistics conglomerate. And the Army habitually confers the three-star comptrollership upon other generals who know practically nothing about finance. This practice of favoring soldiers over specialists breeds incompetence, waste, wrong decisions, cost overruns, weapons foul-ups and, for men in jobs they cannot really handle, personal insecurity.

Another crimp on generalship is Defense Department centralization, and no matter how many stars he wears, no general is exempt. As an ambitious young lieutenant, Maxwell D. Taylor used to dream about becoming Chief of Staff some day and wielding vast power. When his hopes finally came true, he discovered that instead of one boss, at least two dozen layers intervened between him and President Eisenhower. Every general bows to at least one Defense Department overlord, and in many cases to more. This, to be sure, is "civilian control" of the military, but the control often becomes so nit-picking and intrusive that it prevents the services from properly running their internal affairs, and makes every level reluctant to delegate authority.

Overcentralization, misassignment, triviality and short tenure make generalship a superficial business at best. But the most limiting condition of service is a general's precarious perch on the career ladder. Brigadier generals serve on the fringes of power, vying for jobs that lead higher: troop commands and high-level staff assignments. One- and two-star generals remain subject to the efficiency report as they compete to enter the inner elite. The actual transition, if it comes, is not via promotion board but by peer rating. Each three-star general annually lists the ten major generals he considers most likely to succeed. The lists form a guiding consensus for the Army Chief of Staff. Then he, his personnel chief and the Secretary of the Army make final selections, discarding names which displease them, and perhaps adding a few candidates of their own.

Even for generals, promotion offers the only alternative to retirement, since the "up-or-out" policy extends to the very top of the pyramid. If someone listed all the army generals on active duty in 1968, and checked back four years later, 61 per cent of the names would have dropped from the list. During previous four-year periods going back to 1956, the Army retired about 50 per cent of its generals. Recent Navy rates have soared even higher: 81 per cent of its admirals retired between July 1970 and July 1974. During earlier four-year periods, however, Navy rates ran 10 to 20 per cent behind the Army's.

Retired Vice Adm. Gerald E. Miller discussed some little-known consequences of Navy retirement rates in a recent *Armed Forces Journal*. Most senior three- and four-star admirals are on probationary status, living in fear that the morning mail will bring a "pink slip" request that they voluntarily retire within six months. The threat of

being fired cultivates yes men and suppresses even loyal dissent, the admiral wrote.

Gen. "Vinegar Joe" Stilwell once described another handicap for generals, comparing them to a monkey climbing a pole. The higher the monkey goes, Stilwell said, "the more you see of his behind." Because of their exalted position, generals are extremely vulnerable to controversy. A recent commander in Europe, Gen. James H. Polk, was forced to retire—he said he planned to retire anyway—when a Deputy Assistant Defense Secretary visited Polk's domain and decided he was a racist. Upon returning to the United States, the Defense official, himself a black, persuaded a black Congressman to run an article castigating Polk's alleged bigotry in the *Congressional Record*. The worst part of the controversy, Polk later recalled, was that only one of his four-star colleagues offered any comfort or support.

Military history abounds with silent epitaphs of generals forced out by political vendetta. Other tombstones memorialize the careers of generals whose only offense was to say something controversial in public. During the early 1960s, Lieut. Gen. Paul W. Caraway said in a speech at the Golden Gate Club in San Francisco that Okinawa would not be autonomous even if the island were returned to Japan. Caraway was High Commissioner of the Ryukyu Islands at the time, and his speech offended the U.S. Ambassador to Japan, Dr. Edwin O. Reischauer. Soon afterward, the Army asked Caraway to retire, to hold his retirement ceremony in Okinawa rather than in the United States as he had planned, and to fly back "tourist class" via Military Air Transport Service instead of by commercial airline.

In 1966 another three-star general, Stanley Larsen, enraged the Johnson administration by announcing publicly that Cambodia was being used as an enemy sanctuary. The administration forced the general to retract, and the Army transferred him to the Continental Army Command, known to insiders as a "chicken farm" for senior colonels headed for retirement. General Westmoreland later managed to get Larsen a three-star job in the Army's Pacific Command headquarters, but was unable to maneuver a fourth star.

Even in retirement, as noted earlier, generals waive their First Amendment rights to free speech when they agree not to criticize the President, Vice President, Congress and a host of Defense officials. This restriction caused Lieut. Gen. George Patton, just before his fatal automobile crash, to plan to resign rather than retire after World War II. According to his former chief of combat intelligence, Patton felt he could then speak freely and critically.

Such stories explain why generals keep their opinions to themselves, suppress their dissent, conceal their true natures. Inside the green uniforms may dwell men of great force and courage, but unless they reveal themselves, we will never know.

Because they are hand-picked by the current crop, future generals will more likely be facsimiles of their predecessors, playing the game in order to gain power, continuing to play the game in order to exercise it. Generals will remain bland bureaucrats who exercise a superficial

kind of generalship blunted by short tenure, misdirected effort and triviality. Tomorrow's generals will, like their predecessors, live by fear and lead by fear. And because they are sacred cows, they will be content.

But we should not be. The Army is a remarkable institution and, for now at least, will survive in spite of its generals. But it will not survive indefinitely. Nor will the other services, which choose and employ their top leaders in much the same way.

The first step is to deprive generals of this sacred-cow

status and examine them, their selection, their performance with a fresh and critical eye. This calls for external pressure, which will not come unless the public reverses its deepening post-Vietnam indifference to military affairs. More important, citizens must realize that *Seven Days in May* generals are fictions, but weak and ineffectual generals are only too real. A nation that deludes itself into thinking it can buy a strong defense while ignoring the custodians of that awesome machinery is in a situation that should make us all afraid. □

GETTING CANCER ON THE JOB

LARRY AGRAN

In April 1973, Joseph Fitman's doctor told him he had lung cancer. A few days later, he underwent a radical left pneumonectomy—the removal of his left lung. Recovery from the surgery was very slow, difficult and imperfect. At 63, after more than four decades of industrial labor, Joe Fitman was finished as a productive worker.

Now, two years after his cancer operation, Fitman is alive but not well. He sees his life in narrowly measured terms:

I can't do too much. Mostly I just watch TV or walk to the patio and sit down. I tried to work, but I just can't, 'cause I'm fightin' so many things. If I do too much, I wind up goin' to the hospital, an emergency. I get the feelin' like if you ran around the block, stopped, sat down—you'd be takin' deep breaths. Well that's my problem. I get spells where my air was bein' shut off and I feel I'm not gettin' oxygen, and I found myself strugglin' for some air.

Statistically, Joe Fitman's case is one of more than 600,000 new cancer cases in the United States in 1973. But upon analysis, it becomes evident that his cancer was not an inexplicable, unpredictable occurrence. His work history suggests a classic case of job-caused cancer. Fitman toiled for a quarter-century as a hot metalworker, first in a Pennsylvania tin mill and after that as a blacksmith in a steel mill. Long-time metalworkers who are exposed to iron oxides and a host of metallic dusts and fumes develop lung cancer at rates significantly higher than the general population. Later on, in 1958, Fitman went to work for Douglas Aircraft in Long Beach, Calif. His job was to operate a bench saw, cutting fiberglass. While he wore goggles to shield his eyes, he did not wear a respirator; unwittingly, he was inhaling millions of tiny fiberglass particles, now suspected to be a cancer-causing agent. After he was laid off at Douglas in 1961, Fitman took a job, his last one, with a Southern California plastics firm. There, daily for twelve years he handled and breathed a variety of recognized carcinogens, including asbestos, carbon

black and vinyl chloride. It is impossible to say which of these agents was chiefly responsible for his malignancy, but it is reasonable to conclude that it originated with one or more of them.*

In 1973, more than 353,000 Americans died from cancer, up by almost 7,000 from the 1972 death toll. More than a decade ago, a World Health Organization committee of cancer experts concluded that a majority of human cancers could well be attributed to known environmental carcinogens. Since then, U.S. and international authorities have estimated that 80 per cent of human cancers, perhaps even 90 per cent, are environmentally induced: that is, they result from exposures to certain cancer-causing substances in the air, water and soil—at work, in the community, or in the home. To those who study such things, it is apparent that the vast majority of these environmentally induced cancers derive from direct and indirect exposure to industrial carcinogens.

In 1942, Dr. Wilhelm C. Hueper, then a research pathologist, wrote a monumental text, *Occupational Tumors and Allied Diseases*. Drawing upon studies of selected worker populations both here and abroad, Hueper convincingly established the relationship between occupational contact with certain chemicals, metals and minerals and a subsequent high incidence of cancer. In the book, he urged adoption of comprehensive preventive measures to minimize the cancer hazards faced by the industrial workforce. His words had little effect.

From the late 1940s through the 1950s, evidence mounted to support Hueper's theory. Still, despite the persuasive body of evidence, public health authorities remained, for the most part, unmoved. By this time, Hueper had become chief of the National Cancer Institute's Environmental Cancer Section and an embattled pioneer in the field of occupational cancer. In 1964, at the age of 70, he was co-author of a second massive text, *Chemical Carcinogenesis and Cancers*. There, Hueper wrote ominously of an impending "epidemic in slow motion." He noted that human cancer ordinarily does not appear until ten, twenty, or even thirty years after exposure to a carcinogen. With this long latent period in mind, he warned that the unbridled proliferation of cancer-causing substances which accompanied the frenetic industrialization after 1940 would, in time, produce a terrible cancer epidemic

* Joe Fitman died on March 30.

Larry Agran, a Los Angeles attorney, is on the faculty of the UCLA Law School, where he conducts a health law seminar on Cancer Control and the Legislative Process. He is completing a book about national cancer policies.

in the United States. It now appears that a continuing policy of national neglect is, with the passage of time, proving Hueper right.

¶Rubber workers, routinely exposed to multiple cancer-causing substances, are dying of cancer of the stomach, cancer of the prostate and of leukemia and other cancers of the blood-and-lymph-forming tissues at rates ranging from 50 to 300 per cent greater than in the general population.

¶Steelworkers, particularly the thousands who handle coal as it is transferred to coke ovens for combustion and distillation, fall victim to lung cancer at excessive rates. Those who labor atop the hot coke ovens are most vulnerable to the carcinogenic coal-tar emissions and experience a lung cancer rate seven times as great as would normally be expected.

¶Asbestos workers, including those who mill the mineral and those who must use it regularly in construction work and elsewhere, die from lung cancer at a rate more than seven times that of comparable control groups. Mesothelioma, a fatal malignancy which attacks the lining of the lungs and abdominal organs, used to be an extremely rare form of cancer. But it has become relatively commonplace among asbestos workers, even those with short-term occupational exposures.

¶Workers who produce dyestuffs, using benzidine and other so-called aromatic amines, have evidenced notoriously high rates of bladder cancer.

¶Miners of uranium, iron ore, nickel, chromium and other industrial metals succumb to a wide range of occupationally related cancers. In the case of uranium miners, the lung cancer rate is extraordinary, accounting for upward of 50 per cent of all deaths among these workers.

¶An estimated 2 million workers, among them dry cleaners, painters, printers and rubber and petroleum workers, are exposed to the solvent benzene, a known leukemia-producing agent.

¶Another 1.5 million laborers, among them insecticide workers, farm workers and copper and lead smelter workers, are exposed to inorganic arsenic, a carcinogen which causes high rates of lung cancer and lymphatic cancer.

¶Machinists, chemical workers, woodworkers, roofers—and many more—join an ever expanding list of workers who hold jobs posing special cancer risks of one kind or another.

These developments, and others, indicate that we are in the grip of an emerging national epidemic of blue-collar cancer. Yet for decades, federal and state health agencies have treated occupational cancer as a relatively inconsequential issue. A partial explanation for this neglect might be attributed to the widely held but thoroughly misguided expectation of a universal cancer "cure," a dramatic breakthrough which would obviate the need for expensive preventive policies. But a more probable explanation is the tendency of key public health officials, frequently acting with industry spokesmen, to play down the question of occupational cancer, lest it "frighten" workers and possibly impair production.

Even today, federal policy in the area of occupational cancer is only a notch or two above the do-nothing policies of the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. In 1970, hope rose

temporarily among health-conscious reformers when Congress passed the Occupational Safety and Health Act, an ambitious measure establishing a federal framework for the adoption and enforcement of nationwide occupational health standards to assure that "no employee will suffer diminished health, functional capacity, or life expectancy as a result of his work experience." Sponsors of the legislation had reason to believe that the Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), an agency created to administer the act, would give top priority to setting the toughest possible standards for protection against job-caused cancer.

No such luck. Throughout 1971, OSHA adopted no new federal standards. This was no ordinary case of bureaucratic sloth. As we now know, in June of 1972 George C. Guenther, then head of OSHA, sent a confidential memo to higher-ups in the Department of Labor, assuring these administration loyalists that, prior to Election Day, "no highly controversial standards will be proposed by OSHA." Eager to enlist the agency in the Nixon re-election drive, he stressed the attractiveness of a management-oriented OSHA as a "sales point for fund raising."

True to his word, Guenther did not offend management when OSHA finally adopted its first cancer-related work standard, a standard for asbestos exposure. Studies dating back to the 1930s had established airborne asbestos fibers to be a dangerous carcinogen, but the recent work of Dr. Irving Selikoff at the Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York brought out the shocking extent of the damage. About 18 per cent of Americans die of cancer; among asbestos insulation workers, Selikoff found, the toll approaches 50 per cent. Twenty per cent of all long-term asbestos workers die of lung cancer. Another 5 per cent die from the previously rare cancer, mesothelioma. Stomach and colon cancer account for still more of the excess cancer deaths.

Armed with this data, Selikoff and labor officials urged upon OSHA the only prudent course when dealing with a carcinogen of such demonstrated potency: adoption of a standard which allows "no detectable level" of exposure. For its part, the industry proposed a standard which would permit the prevailing death-dealing asbestos exposure levels to continue. In the end, OSHA adopted a standard which fell between the two proposals, cutting maximum exposure levels in half. OSHA thus ignored a fundamental principle of cancer prevention policy: there is no "safe level" for exposure to a cancer-causing agent. While lowering the level of exposure can ordinarily be expected to lower the incidence, anything short of a "zero tolerance level" carries the strong likelihood of excessive cancer deaths.

Quite obviously OSHA officials were attempting to balance competing interests by striking a compromise with their new asbestos standard, but the compromise is so weak in content that it will have only marginal effect on cancer rates among asbestos workers. Accordingly, it will certainly lead to still thousands more of needless cancer deaths among the several hundred thousand asbestos workers in the United States.

In early 1974, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration passed up an extraordinary opportunity to

get a firm hold on the entire problem of workplace carcinogens. The Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers Union and the Washington-based Health Research Group filed a petition with OSHA requesting that exposure levels for ten recognized workplace carcinogens be set at "zero tolerance." Even more important, the petition included a request that OSHA adopt a precedent-setting permit system whereby carcinogens would be barred in industrial processes unless a firm had sought and received a government-issued use permit. In that way, a manufacturer could not legally use specified carcinogens until OSHA had surveyed the work environment and certified it to be exposure-proof.

OSHA did adopt fairly rigorous standards for the ten cancer-causing substances, and for another four substances. But it rejected the all-important permit proposal, on the dubious ground that initiation of such a system was beyond the scope of its statutory authority. For the first time, an industry producing or using certain carcinogens would have been required to make a convincing showing that: (1) the substance was essential to its operations; (2) there were no appropriate substitutes of lesser danger; and (3) all necessary steps were being taken to safeguard employees against any exposure whatever. OSHA determined this was too much to ask.

Without a permit system, OSHA will need a veritable army to enforce even the limited number of carcinogen standards adopted to date. No such army exists. There are at present 800 federal occupational health and safety compliance officers. And, of these, fewer than 100 are technically qualified industrial hygienists. Charged with monitoring all of the abuses of the workplace—among them, noise, heat and the use of toxic but non-carcinogenic chemicals—this staff cannot pretend to police effectively the country's plants and factories.

Joe Fitman was a helpless victim of this kind of lax enforcement effort, particularly during his last twelve years as a worker when he was employed by a Southern California plastics outfit. It was with some bitterness that he described the squalid conditions of his labor:

In a way I knew the materials I was workin' with was dangerous, but when you're up in age like me—your age is against you. You've got a house payment. You've got five kids around the table.

I feel sorry for the fellas that are tryin' to hold their jobs in that place because only I know, due to my experience, how dangerous that place is to work. From my point of view, that place is filthy up there. And I just wonder, throughout this country, if the rest of the places are like that.

The Occupational Safety and Health Act took effect on April 28, 1971. But Joe Fitman couldn't remember any inspections ever taking place, either before or after that date.

A second federal agency intimately involved with the occupational cancer issue is the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). It is the research agency responsible for conducting studies and recommending workplace standards to OSHA. But while OSHA is part of the Department of Labor, NIOSH is within the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. It was set up as a worker-oriented health protection

agency and the caliber of its work has been in keeping with that purpose. Thanks to a staff of aggressive young technicians, there has never been any real problem with the quality of NIOSH's work, but there has always been a problem with the quantity. The institute is starved for funds and for personnel. Its entire 1974-75 budget for occupational cancer was a puny \$1.8 million. To conduct a single study on the effects that a suspect carcinogen has had on the death rates of a defined population of workers costs \$250,000 and occupies six people for at least a year. Since the equivalent of only twenty-eight full-time staff positions are devoted to these occupational cancer studies, it is obvious that only a handful of studies can be completed each year. As a result, the backlog of both recognized and suspect carcinogens not yet studied by NIOSH grows ever larger: commercial talc, mineral wool, antimony, wood dust, phosphoric acid, benzidine—there are scores of urgent studies left undone for lack of resources.

Though a relatively small proportion of chemicals induce cancers, nevertheless hundreds of commercially important compounds are known to be cancer-causing, or at least are highly suspect. And the industrial process feeds hundreds of new substances into industrial and commercial channels each year. Only the foolhardy would assume them all to be non-carcinogenic.

In years past, the cancer-causing properties of new compounds were generally not discovered until at least two or three decades after their adoption by industry. The method of discovery was a crude kind of human experimentation: counting the number of cancer victims among the dead workers to see if any abnormal trends could be detected. That was how vinyl chloride was spotted.

Vinyl chloride was first produced commercially in this country in 1939. It is an organic chemical, a gas at normal air temperature and pressure. Chemical plants convert this gas into a hard granular resin, called polyvinyl chloride, which has become the base for a cornucopia of solid and flexible plastics: food wrappings, bottles, vinyl tiles, phonograph records, water pipes, toys, car upholstery, tubing and thousands of other commonly used plastic products. The country now produces more than 7 billion pounds of polyvinyl chloride a year. Some 300,000 workers are involved in the chain of production—from the synthesis of the gas to the manufacture of the resin to the fabrication of the plastics. They work with vinyl chloride in its principal cancer-causing forms, and they have borne the brunt of this latest occupational peril.

Raymond P. Gettelfinger, Jr. began to work with vinyl chloride in 1954, when at the age of 22 he hired on at the B.F. Goodrich plant in Louisville. His job included operating the giant vat-like reactors used to transform the gas into resin. Gettelfinger recalls that the sweet smell of vinyl chloride was always thick in the air, but that it was worst when he and his colleagues had to climb down into the reactors and spend as many as four hours at a time cleaning and scraping the residue of the resin off the walls.

You have a residue build-up on the wall of your reactor and in some cases you have a water residue in the bottom. When I went to work there, that was the job of the helper—to get in and take the residue off the wall, which we done with scrapers. And if there was any left

on the bottom . . . you'd pick it out with your hands—bare hands or leather gloves and your hands were wet. . . . When I began we wore nothing for protection. All we done was took an exhaust hose and stuck it in there and sucked the vinyl chloride out and we got in. . . .

Now, vinyl chloride has a characteristic that if there should be a mixture near the bottom of the vessel or reactor you were in, your feet would start feeling cold if there was much in there. Then you would know it was time to get out and see what is wrong. That, in the early years when I worked there, that was your first warning sign. . . . We didn't even—it wasn't in the safety regulations when I began working there to keep your exhaust hose in the reactor with you all the time.

It was in the mid-1960s, more than ten years after Gettelfinger joined Goodrich, that some of the workers there began to worry about the effect of vinyl chloride on their health. According to Gettelfinger:

We just got to noticing that there was just a few too many of us young men—the men working in the company, we were young men—they were losing too many guys. As we sat and ate and had our breaks, we just got to thinking that maybe there might be a little too much—too many of us guys just getting out of this world too young.

It wasn't until January 1974, that the company publicly acknowledged similar fears. Dr. John L. Creech, a Louisville surgeon who is also the plant physician at Goodrich, was alert enough to notice that three Goodrich workers had died of angiosarcoma of the liver, an extremely rare form of cancer that attacks the blood vessels of the liver. Some months earlier, industry representatives had received in secret the results of animal studies commissioned by European plastics manufacturers. They showed that rats breathing air with vinyl chloride concentrations as low as 250 ppm—250 parts per million—developed a variety of cancers, including angiosarcomas of the liver. Then, in June 1974, it was found that angiosarcomas could be induced in rats with exposures of only 50 ppm. Yet for years workers had been breathing air with vinyl chloride concentrations ranging as high as 8,000 ppm.

After what was apparently an industry attempt to withhold the animal cancer findings from NIOSH during the last six months of 1973, in January 1974, Goodrich announced the cause of the three deaths that Dr. Creech had noticed. Once the story was out, the body count began in earnest. From the beginning, interest centered primarily on victims of angiosarcoma. This type of liver tumor had previously been so rare that there were thought to be fewer than thirty cases a year in the United States. Yet, so far, at the Louisville plant alone nine workers are reported to have the disease. In other U.S. plants, another dozen victims have been found, with new cases turning up almost monthly. All but two are now dead. One of the victims was Raymond Gettelfinger; age 43, the father of six. He died on March 11.

Since a latent period of ten to thirty years is typical for this and other human cancers, it is apparent that we are now seeing just the onset of this particular outbreak of occupational cancer. Reduced exposure levels were adopted last fall by OSHA (exposures as high as 25 ppm are still permitted), but the malignant cells are already loose in

the bodies of countless vinyl chloride workers, and it seems likely that during the next twenty years the liver cancer toll will climb into the hundreds. Moreover, while the victims of angiosarcoma have received the major share of public concern, the even more tragic fact is that vinyl chloride also produces less exotic cancers at alarmingly excessive rates: cancers of the lung and respiratory system at more than one and one-half times the normal expectancy, lymphoma and leukemia at nearly twice normal and brain cancer at five and one-half times normal.

Of course the industry could have done more than it did to prevent this suffering. But more important, public policy should have required more. The animal studies on vinyl chloride which were completed in Europe in 1973 should have been done in 1939, before plastics became a multibillion-dollar industry in which workers are the unwitting subjects of a vast on-the-job experiment in human carcinogenesis.

In response to the vinyl chloride disaster, and to similar but less publicized cancer episodes over the years, the new Congress will almost certainly adopt a proposed Toxic Substances Control Act. This legislation would establish machinery to require the animal testing of specified chemical compounds for their toxic and carcinogenic properties. But which compounds would be subject to testing is not all that clear. Apparently, the Congress intends to vest enormous discretionary authority with the director of the Environmental Protection Agency. Under pending proposals, the director could require the testing of any substance which he or she "has reason to believe may pose an unreasonable threat to human health or the environment."

If the Toxic Substances Control Act had been in effect ten years ago, would the government have ordered testing of vinyl chloride? Maybe yes, maybe no; at the time the evidence did not necessarily compel such a course. That is why it would be preferable if the Congress adopted a Toxic Substances Control Act which required—perhaps over a ten-year span—that *all* industrially and commercially significant substances be tested for their carcinogenicity and other destructive effects. It would be an enormous undertaking, but one more than matched by the need to gain firm control over the industrial environment. Are there other vinyl chlorides lurking out there? Certainly. Perhaps less dramatic in impact, but certainly. The tens of thousands of substances now in use make it certain that in the years ahead more workplace disasters will be uncovered.

There is yet another dimension to the menace of job-caused cancer: occupational carcinogens frequently do not remain within the factory gates. Certain of them, such as asbestos fibers, pose a distinct take-home risk. Family members are inadvertently exposed when work clothes covered with millions of tiny fibers are brought home to be hung or washed. This kind of incidental exposure has already produced a number of documented cases of the ever fatal mesothelioma. And X-rays of the families of asbestos workers have revealed excessive rates of the lung abnormalities common to the workers themselves.

Nor are the relatives of workers the only members of the community who face such hazards. Many plants pro-

ducing or using carcinogens pose exceptional risks to those who live nearby. In the case of asbestos, both South African and U.S. studies have related a high incidence of "neighborhood cases" of mesothelioma to exposure to fibers airborne from nearby production sites. In the case of vinyl chloride, even at this early point victims of angiosarcoma of the liver have been reported among citizens who have never worked with the substance but who have lived for some time near a vinyl chloride plant. The neighborhood victims of vinyl chloride-induced lung cancer can never be identified with any measure of certainty. Statistically, they are lost in a national swamp of 80,000 annual lung cancer deaths. Last year, plastics producers discharged more than 200 million pounds of vinyl chloride into the air. Nevertheless, according to Environmental Protection Agency officials—the EPA monitors emissions beyond the factory gates—it will be another year before the agency adopts standards to limit community exposures to vinyl chloride.

Vinyl chloride and asbestos are only tiny aspects of the community cancer question. A study of Los Angeles County cancer rates recently reported a markedly higher incidence of lung cancer among residents in the heavily industrialized south-central area. The study attributed the excess lung cancers to particularly high levels of benzo(a)pyrene, a carcinogen that is probably formed of effluents from the petroleum and chemical industries concentrated in the area. Years earlier, a similar study on Staten Island, New York disclosed that unusually high lung cancer rates in certain areas were related to wind conditions and the resultant exposure to airborne industrial carcinogens.

The indirect effect of occupational carcinogens was brought home again recently when elevated cancer rates in New Orleans and several other cities were attributed to water supplies contaminated with industrial carcinogens. Biostatisticians are only now beginning to consider the question of miscarriages among the wives of male workers exposed to carcinogens. The phenomenon was first noted among the wives of anesthesiologists who were regularly exposed to the gases present in an operating room. Now, among the wives of vinyl chloride workers, early evidence indicates a striking increase in the rates of both miscarriages and stillbirths.

In a related and highly disturbing development, two Canadian investigators surveyed the records of several hundred children who died of malignant diseases. Upon checking the occupations of their fathers at their time of birth, the investigators found that a disproportionately high number held jobs that exposed them to recognized cancer-causing agents: for example, service-station attendants, painters, dyers and cleaners working with solvents. The possibility of take-home exposure in this study looms large, since the developing cells of the fetus are known to be particularly vulnerable to carcinogens that cross the placental barrier. A second possibility, more frightening still, is that the workplace carcinogens have damaged the father's sperm cells, initiating a "carcinogenetic defect" which is then transmitted at conception, producing a child who subsequently develops cancer as a youngster.

If this society is to come to terms with the multiple

horrors of occupational cancer, it must begin by discarding the distracting notion of a universal and imminent cancer "cure." Despite the more than \$500 million per year spent on cancer research, there is no reason to believe that a major breakthrough is at hand. There will be no quick fix for occupational cancers, or for any other environmentally induced cancers. It is equally important that we discard the fatalistic notion that "everything causes cancer." While many widely used industrial and commercial substances are carcinogenic, the vast majority—both at the workplace and elsewhere—are in this respect harmless. The real task is to identify the agents that are carcinogens and then enforce the strictest measures to prevent human exposure to them.

If this Congress were to adopt a tough Toxic Substances Control Act, requiring the prior testing of all commercially and industrially significant substances, it would be taking an important step toward isolating workplace carcinogens much earlier than is now the case. But, if it is to be more than a gesture, the Congress must back that kind of legislation with major appropriations to the Environmental Protection Agency which will administer its provisions. Furthermore, the Congress should see to it that the chemical testing program within the National Cancer Institute is accelerated with significantly larger appropriations. Currently, the Chemical Carcinogenesis Program receives only 6 per cent of the National Cancer Institute's funds, despite the evidence that cancers are largely the result of chemical exposures.

Beyond the animal testing programs, there is the question of on-site worker studies carried out by NIOSH. Its present \$1.8 million budget for occupational cancer studies is disgracefully inadequate. Just to keep from being overwhelmed by a backlog of undone studies, NIOSH needs another \$10 million earmarked for occupational cancer.

The situation is perhaps most discouraging with respect to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the Department of Labor's standards-setting and enforcement agency. In the area of occupational carcinogens, and in other areas as well, OSHA has been a bitter disappointment during its four-year history. Perhaps by way of Congressional mandate, the agency can be compelled to adopt a use-permit system to assure the most stringent and effective controls over occupational carcinogens. Its snail-paced operations indicate that OSHA lacks the money, manpower and single-minded determination to carry out its mission on behalf of American workers. Congress can remedy the first two problems; the third will probably have to await a new administration.

When he wrote *Occupational Tumors and Allied Diseases* in 1942, Dr. Hueper began with a chapter dealing with what he called "the new artificial environment." He observed that the great medical advances of the late 19th century and the first half of the 20th century came with an understanding of the biologically destructive effects of bacteria, viruses and other microorganisms. Similarly, he argued, the great challenge for the second half of the 20th century was to recognize the cancer-causing effects of many chemicals and other substances which have been introduced at the workplace in burgeoning numbers as part of the industrial age. It was a vital message, one that has been largely ignored for thirty-three years. □

BOOKS & THE ARTS

The Sense of Being Alive

LETTERS OF JAMES STEPHENS.
Edited by Richard T. Finneran. Macmillan Publishing Co. 481 pp. \$20.

VIVIAN MERCIER

Among the "Christmas boxes" given by Anna Livia Plurabelle to her "furzeborn sons" we find "for Seumas, thought little, a crown he feels big." This refers to James Stephens, a small Dubliner with a large, bald crown to his head; another "crown" that he may have felt rather too big for him was James Joyce's offer to let him finish *Finnegans Wake* if death or illness prevented Joyce from doing so. The offer was based partly on personal affection for Stephens, partly on admiration for some of his poetry and prose, but chiefly, I think, on Joyce's understanding that he and Stephens were both born in Dublin on February 2, 1882. The odd thing about this is that Stephens didn't really know when he was born but, as Professor Finneran shows, had fixed on this birth date for himself long before he ceased denigrating Joyce and his work or, probably, had any idea of when Joyce was born. Stephens was either an orphan or an abandoned child when taken into the Meath Protestant Industrial School for Boys in June 1886: the school authorities believed him to be 6 years old then. After ten years in the school, he went to work for a lawyer. As he afterwards wrote in a letter:

I . . . was discharged from, and discharged myself from innumerable situations. I would sooner be a corpse than a clerk, and I have been a hungry man many, many times. Some people think hunger and hardship is necessary to art. It is not. All that comes from hunger and the lower hardships is dullness. . . .

In 1901 he turned up as a member of a prizewinning amateur gymnastic team; in 1907, now a skilled legal typist, he began contributing prose and verse to Arthur Griffith's nationalist weekly, *Sinn Féin*. Finneran's book is at least the third to claim that Stephens contributed a single essay (signed "S") to Griffith's *United Irishman* as early as September 16, 1905, overlooking the fact that "Seumas O'Sul-

livan" (James Sullivan Starkey) republished that piece, "The Greatest Miracle," as his own in *Essays and Recollections*. Joyce had already confused the record by having someone say in *Ulysses*, ostensibly on June 16, 1904, "James Stephens is doing some clever sketches." Perhaps I'm quibbling too much: the true miracle is that Stephens, with his upbringing and education, ever became a published author, at 23, 25, 27 or any other age.

After publishing a striking first book of poems, *Insurrections*, in 1909, Stephens scattered his prose and verse yet more lavishly in the furrows of non-paying Dublin periodicals. His *annus mirabilis*, 1912, reaped the harvest. Poems from *Sinn Féin* and the *Irish Review* went into *The Hill of Vision*; a serial called "Mary: A Story" from the *Irish Review* was published in London as *The Charwoman's Daughter* and in Boston as *Mary, Mary*; "The Old Philosopher," a character in many of the *Sinn Féin* prose sketches, developed into the cranky hero of yet a third book published in this marvelous year: *The Crock of Gold*, a prose fantasy that has been in print almost continuously ever since. Stephens was a founder of the *Irish Review*; one of the co-founders was Thomas MacDonagh; Joseph Plunkett later became editor, and Patrick Pearse was a contributor: soon, these three were to be executed as leaders of the 1916 Easter Rising. Arthur Griffith lived to be the first Prime Minister of the Irish Free State, in 1922. Stephens collected his short stories from Griffith's *Sinn Féin* and elsewhere for *Here Are Ladies* (1913), but *The Demi-Gods* (1914) was new work, a fantastic novel written in a month or six weeks at Paris café tables. Having published four major prose works in three years, Stephens was to publish only four more in the thirty-six years that remained to him. He had quit lawyers' offices for Paris in 1913, but war drastically curtailed publishing; by 1915 he was willing to accept a routine job as Registrar of the National Gallery of Ireland, which he held until January 1925. After that, he made his home in London and his living chiefly in the United States—from lecture tours, poetry readings, editorial work and odd jobs arranged by W.T.H. Howe of the American Book Company, recipient of many of these letters. From the beginning of World War II until his

death in 1950, Stephens wrote almost nothing except a series of radio talks for the BBC, chiefly reminiscences about the mighty dead—Yeats, Joyce, Synge, "A.E." (George Russell)—whom he had known in Dublin and outlived in spite of persistent ill health. These broadcasts, edited by Lloyd Frankenberg and published in 1964, are masterpieces of their kind—but what kind? Oral history? Humor? Folklore? At any rate, only Stephens could have produced them.

Set down like this, the story of James Stephens sounds all too familiar: a good writer ruined by too-swift success, a hungry boy made lazy by sudden affluence, a garrulous Irishman more willing to talk his books than write them. The 376 letters gathered by Finneran—only thirty had been published before—offer plenty of evidence to support this view, at least so far as the prose work is concerned, but they remind us again and again, like every rereading of the *Collected Poems*, that Stephens was an authentic poet, however limited his range. "Poetry is the top game of all, and I thank the gods that I got the chance of writing it. I don't believe there is any other excitement so keen as it, and it doesn't hurt any body in the world." He describes how he would keep his inspiration alive while still working in a lawyer's office:

I knew I had a poem, not because an idea was in my head, there never was, but because I had a feeling there, which I never found to be a false intimation; and my task was . . . to keep hot for five or six hours that feeling, so that some part of my mind was occupied sitting on that (what shall I call it) warmth, intimation, radiance—like a hen sitting on an egg, while the other and normal parts of my head were listening to the voice of the dictator, watching the keyboard, and spelling out the rotund legal utterance.

In boyhood and early manhood, Stephens tells us, he read anything he could lay his hands on, provided it was in prose; finally he decided to "give the poets a chance" and began with Browning. "I was surprised when I read him, and was very proud to find that I knew what he was talking or singing about." Pretty soon he was writing poems himself, *Insurrections* being the fruit of his Browning phase. He tried Tennyson next, without result, but

The first night that I read Blake I wrote fifteen poems, and I kept on like that

Vivian Mercier teaches English at the University of California, Santa Barbara. He is the author of *The Irish Comic Tradition* (Galaxy Books) and *A Reader's Guide to the New Novel* (The Noonday Press).

for a year. . . . A phrase from him could set me drunk, and if I did not always understand what he was saying, understand that is in terms of logic, I knew what he was saying by the sense he awakened in me, by the emotion which was like a bridge thrown between the dead man and the living one.

After reading these boasts, so sincerely meant, it is heartbreaking to find Stephens writing thus to a close friend nine years later: "I don't want to write any more. Three-quarters of all writing anyhow is an indecent exhibition of oneself." The context does not tell us whether this refers to poetry as well as prose but the sad fact is that Stephens published new poems in only seven of his last twenty-five years, according to Finneran's listing of his contributions to periodicals. Was what Stephens wrote of Francis Ledwidge—"A man is a mind & so is a poet & they are man and poet only to the extent of that"—true of himself also? Had he exhausted the limited resources of his mind by 1926? In earlier years, as we have seen, he could refresh himself at other poets' wells: after Blake, his next big discovery was Gaelic literature, which inspired a volume of poems, *Reincarnations* (1918), based on poets who had written in Modern Irish from the 16th century through 1850. He later wrote three prose works—*Deirdre*, *In the Land of Youth* and the misleadingly titled *Irish Fairy Tales*—based on the sagas found in Old and Middle Irish manuscripts. A short but important letter acknowledges his debt here to the Irish scholar Richard Best. Stephens "discovered" Keats and Shelley only in 1921, but this did not lead to any great new surge of poetry. Perhaps he grew tired in mid-career from physical rather than psychic causes. In 1920 he had "two rather severe operations" for gastric ulcers: severe internal bleeding before diagnosis in such cases may cause anemia and even brain damage. I would suggest that the ulcers dated from one of the periods of near-starvation in his youth, as Thomas De Quincey's did: the English Opium-Eater became addicted to the standard medication for ulcers in his day.

There are fewer examples in the letters than one would expect of the quirky humor that makes Stephens' early prose works so hard to imitate, unless the late Flann O'Brien is doing the imitating. Unlike Joyce, Stephens doesn't go in for word games even when he finds so inviting a word as the name of the publisher B.W. Huebsch; instead of ringing the changes on its sound and meaning, he leaves the word as is and lets his humor play all around it: "After all I am only five feet three high and cannot be expect-

ed to talk hard words like that . . ." and so on for a whole page. Here is the literary equivalent of a Chaplin routine: "Absinthe is the most drunken drink I have yet tasted. My left leg got quite intoxicated & would have misbehaved itself, but my right leg took care of us both & we bore obliquely but safely away from motors & such. . . ." A few letters tend to confirm the unfortunate impression that Stephens left with Lytton Strachey in 1928, when he met him at Lady Ottoline Morrell's. Strachey wrote:

One of those essentially frivolous minds that mask themselves under a grand apparatus of earnestness and high-mindedness. On and on he went— inveighing against "destructive criticism" (that tedious old story), pointing out that no one could write about love, but only about sex, lamenting that there were no epics, etc., etc.

It is on these very subjects that Stephens is apt to sound pretentious in his letters: in the company of Oxford and Cambridge men like Aldous Huxley—who was also present—and Strachey, he probably felt very conscious of his poor education and pontificated in a style reminiscent of "A.E." and Yeats, who by the way were no better educated than Stephens. The Stephens who could be such

OCTOBER

*Who is it for
this maple
clear yellow
wasting by itself
dropping gold
legacy of leaves
all for blind earth*

*Field of dead ferns
withered brown hands
dried grasses
calculus of seeds
a perennial dying
goldenrod skeleton
white everlasting
eternity
on a human scale*

*Color smothers death
conspiracy of roots
leaf-mould in layers
gold over brown
sleeping until
green takes the season
woods an empty thing
not answering questions
approaches design
who is it for*

Alfred Corn

a keen eyewitness of history—see *The Insurrection in Dublin* (1916)—is almost entirely missing from the letters: we get a brief account of a young man's death during the Black-and-Tan terror and some glimpses of wartime Paris. Other letters, though, remind us that poets have a source of knowledge—call it intuition, perhaps—denied to other men. Note for instance these shrewd remarks from a 1916 letter: ". . . as you see, it is from Germany that the peace rumour comes. People infer from this a laxity in the German morale. The contrary is true—they talk of peace because they can afford to do so. . . ." When Stephens tries to reason about literature, he tends to go astray, but here again he has flashes of intuition: just a couple of years before Raymond Weaver disinterred Melville for the centenary of his birth, Stephens is asking John Quinn, "Did you ever read a book by an American author, Hermann [sic] Melville, called Moby Dick—thats a book!"

My final judgment of these letters must be that they tell us much about Stephens' career as a writer and surprisingly little about anything else. Presumably Finneran has printed all the letters that were made available to him, but he does not say so: he simply assures us that "all letters are presented in full" and that "there has been no attempt to regularize Stephens' idiosyncratic style." Nor does he say whether other letters exist that he has not been allowed to publish, for whatever reason. One notices that there are only four letters from Stephens to his wife and two each to his son and daughter. A "Chronology" shows that the son, James Naoise, met an accidental death in 1937, but there are no references to this sad event in the letters. Stephens' reticence about intimate matters may explain this and other gaps: for instance, it would be hard to obtain from these letters any clear sense of his religious beliefs, though he does state baldly on page 210, "I believe in reincarnation." He seems to have shared the theosophical beliefs of his good friend "A.E." and certainly read the Upanishads and the Vedas throughout his life. Another good friend was Stephen MacKenna, the translator of Plotinus, but in spite of the affinities between Neoplatonism and theosophy, Stephens never discusses anything seriously in letters to MacKenna except, occasionally, his own poetry. Rightly or wrongly, I feel dissatisfied with this book, just as I did with the first volume of Joyce's letters, but whereas in that case I knew that many more letters existed—two more volumes' worth as it turned out—this time I can only wonder whether some caches of Stephens' material still await discovery. In the meanwhile,

his personality remains surprisingly enigmatic behind the mask of artless simplicity he wears in so many of his poems and letters. Still, everybody interested in Stephens must be grateful to Professor Finneran for what he has found and presented so informatively, though his corrections of Stephens' bad French and worse Gaelic are needlessly repetitive and sometimes themselves incorrect. Nevertheless, the long autobiographical letter to Lewis Chase on pp. 201-206, already

quoted from more than once, is by itself almost worth the high price of admission. It contains the best self-criticism Stephens ever wrote: "I think I portray *living*, or the sense of being alive, or the sense of receptiveness better than most others can do. . . . They give the idea of action, I try to give the idea of being. . . ." Any writer who can make this claim with justice, however small his total output, will never be entirely forgotten. □

that the issue is not whether workers' needs, the educational system, and just about everything else one cares for are well adapted to the characteristics of the market but whether the market is well enough adapted to serving us. But that, say Levitan and Johnston, is sentimental nonsense.

Vast impersonal forces of supply and demand rule the market, says *Work Is Here To Stay*, not the efforts of well-meaning but misguided reformers. The market rules us, we don't rule it; so it's a doubly good thing that the market is, in fact, efficient enough and beneficent enough to be taking care of our problem.

We do indeed have a problem, they admit. Workers these days are better educated, more affluent, more mobile and more financially secure than their forefathers. Furthermore, they have unions to represent their point of view with significant collective strength. This is allowing choices to be made by the suppliers of labor which translate into pressures for more meaningful, more satisfying, more fulfilling work. It is in the nature of a market, moreover, that those pressures on the supply side of the labor market generate sufficient responses on the demand side for meaningful work, or some substitute thereof, to be created automatically as fast as the need for it arises. That all is going well can be seen in the absolute inability of anyone to produce hard data to the effect that workers are becoming more alienated or that job dissatisfaction is growing.

Did I say that the market was a doubly good thing? Nay, triply good, for any of the other proposed responses to job dissatisfaction—job enrichment, participatory management, job redesign, etc.—is palpably inadequate. There is no hard evidence that they work where they are said to work; they are more than likely to impose unacceptable costs in wages, profits and efficiency; and there are many jobs where work reform cannot be said to work at all: "Typists type, welders weld, and auto workers fabricate cars. . . . The prospects for humanizing work are limited most by the realities of the work to be done, realities which are beyond the power of planners to control."

Thus thrice blest, we still must ask whether this idyll of automatic amelioration will come to pass. Don't bet your ticket stubs to *Modern Times* on it. After much justified criticism of work-reform enthusiasts for lack of hard data and for "straight-line forecasts of a single trend," Levitan and Johnston are singularly unable to support their case with much more than vague speculation and straight-line forecasts of single trends. Although they are reasonably

In the Sweat of Thy Face, etc.

WORK IS HERE TO STAY, ALAS. By Sar A. Levitan and William B. Johnston. Olympus Publishing Company. 184 pp. \$7.95.

DAVID LOOMAN

In 1972, partially in response to an apparent jacquerie at the General Motors Assembly Division's Lordstown, Ohio, plant, more than 175 books, articles and television specials appeared, cataloguing and bemoaning the plight of the alienated and discontented worker. The following year almost an equal number of books, articles and television specials appeared, purporting to debunk all that had gone before.

In a society as firmly committed to the middle of the road (and full employment for social scientists) as ours is, it was inevitable that a book would appear which would attempt to compose the differences between the Class of '72 and the Class of '73. In keeping with the principles of via media and liberal technocracy, William B. Johnston and Sar A. Levitan, the latter one of the elders of manpower analysis, have produced a book which concludes that everyone is a little bit right, and everyone is a little bit wrong. There is indeed a problem with work in America, but much of it is simply inevitable, and the rest of it is being automatically taken care of by the orderly mechanisms of the free market and the competent and benevolent ministrations of the appropriate experts. People are right to be concerned, but this concern is best manifested by aggressive inaction—or benign neglect—leaving the market and its technicians free to produce their inevitable benefits.

David Looman was formerly the assistant to the director, The Labor Education and Research Service, Ohio State University. He has worked in or around the labor movement most of his life, and is at present with the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees.

Although this response was predictable, it is nevertheless remarkable. The market's invisible hand seems to be making obscene gestures at us these days, and the appropriate experts have brought us enough disasters recently—ranging from war in Vietnam to stagflation—to try the capacity for faith of all but the most mystical. Those of us who are less easily transported may be excused if we are a bit skeptical that everything is under control.

It was also predictable that market mechanisms would play an almost omnipotent role for Levitan and Johnston, for their conception of the status of work is totally in market terms:

The hypotheses about the dynamics and variables of job satisfaction tend to be inconclusive because they fail to address the central issues. In brief, how well has the changing work force been matched to the evolving job market? Have most people been sufficiently educated for the jobs they hold, or have the job requirements of the economy veered away from the educational system? Are workers overeducated for unchallenging jobs, or are jobs changing so fast and becoming so sophisticated that too many workers are being relegated to the slag heap of the unemployable? Have the expectations of the majority far outstripped the possibilities of the job market, dooming millions to frustration in their work? Or are enough "good jobs" being created to occupy those who want them? Can workers still make their peace with the requirements of the workplace as well as they ever did?

That is a little dismal. Nothing at all like Studs Terkel, for example, in *Working*: "It is about a search, too, for daily meaning as well as daily bread, for recognition as well as cash, for astonishment rather than torpor; in short, for a sort of life rather than a Monday through Friday sort of dying." In view of the importance of work in the lives of individuals and societies, one might argue

successful in showing that the data are too unreliable to demonstrate the existence of increasing job dissatisfaction, they rather cavalierly disregard the fact that the data offer no consolation at all to the view that the functioning of the market is keeping dissatisfaction stable. Their evidence that the market does respond to worker choices is pretty much limited to the case of the vanishing household servant. Household service was demeaning and poorly paid. Given alternatives, people chose not to work in that occupation, and the job category dried up. Q.E.D.

Aside from the paucity of evidence provided by just one case, the example of household service generates a certain amount of skepticism. If ever there was a situation in which the free market ought to work, it would be in household service, with its large number of small and independent buyers and sellers. How very unlike our own corporate world. Nevertheless, even here things are not so pretty. Household service still employs roughly the same number of people, albeit a much smaller percentage of the work force, as it did in 1900, and under roughly the same poorly paid and demeaning circumstances. Might we not with more justice say that here are a million and a half jobs for which the job market did nothing? It simply left them behind as a beachhead while it moved on to blight new areas.

Moreover, the question of household service brings up the subject of service in general. The service sector of the economy is the least desirable to work in from a variety of different aspects: the pay is generally worse, there is less job security, most jobs are dull and demeaning, fringe benefits are worse, etc. Nonetheless, it is the fastest growing sector of the economy. Does this indicate that jobs respond to what people want or is it that people work at what they can get?

In fact, *Work Is Here To Stay* shows neither that the market responds to people's free choices, nor that people are free to make choices. Freedom of choice, say Levitan and Johnston, is just around the corner, brought on by the increased education, affluence and financial security of the American worker.

Though free choice is not a fact for the unemployed, the poor, or the disadvantaged, for growing segments of the population work is already advancing toward "leisure"; that is, toward more freely chosen activity. This trend, which is only emerging as a trend now, is likely to swell as time goes on. . . .

. . . In the next few decades, higher incomes will grant broad discretion in work to an unprecedented number of individuals; transfer incomes will allow many to escape from jobs entirely; in-

vestment income will make labor optional to hundreds of thousands more.

One would hardly know from reading this that we live in a country where as late as 1985, only 16 per cent of the adults will have had a college education; more than half the population in the last year for which we have data (1962) had a net worth, including house and car, of less than \$6,000; where half the nation lives below the Bureau of Labor Statistics "moderate" budget, and one-third of the nation (still!) lives below the BLS "low" budget; and where unemployment and concentration of wealth are both increasing, while welfare budgets are decreasing.

Much of the book has this "diamond as big as the Ritz" fantasy quality. For example, the authors state casually, "Part of this rose-colored vision has indeed been realized. Present-day workplaces are overwhelmingly better designed for safety and comfort, though the current concern about industrial accidents indicates persistence of the problem." Persistence indeed! There were 5.8 million industrial accidents last year requiring medical attention, and no one knows how many industrial diseases. There is no evidence that American workplaces

have gotten a bit safer in the last decade, and there is every indication that they may be getting worse.

One winds up wondering where Levitan and Johnston do live, and whether Adam Smith does haunt their chambers in the dead of night. Above all, one wonders if they actually believe we can have progress and prosperity instead of unemployment and deprivation, if our only stance toward the rights of workers is one of benign neglect—and a mystical faith that things, left to themselves, will get better day by day.

In one of their moments of serene and elegiac optimism, the authors note: "General Motors, whatever its problems with turnover, absenteeism, sabotage, and strikes still pays 440,000 hourly workers and evidently continues to profit handsomely by their labor. At Lordstown, the strike is over, and the line is cranking out Vegas with a vengeance."

Well, General Motors isn't paying 440,000 hourly workers anymore, and it's not profiting so handsomely either. The week *The Wall Street Journal* lauded the Levitan-Johnston book, the Lordstown workers tore the line apart and went on strike over working conditions again. This time—glory be to God for benign neglect—nobody was watching. □

Speaking Directly to the Young

MISSISSIPPI: Conflict and Change. Edited by James W. Loewen and Charles Sallis. Pantheon Books. 386 pp. \$10. Paper \$6.95.

JASON BERRY

This is a most remarkable and timely book—a revisionist study of Mississippi history, a textbook for high-school students concentrating on civil rights struggles and the ensuing changes. The editors are two academicians—Charles Sallis, a historian who chairs the Millsaps College Social Science Division, and James Loewen, associate professor at Tougaloo, the black college outside Jackson—and it was written with the help of six students and teachers at the two colleges in the early 1970s.

The book in use for years in the state's schools is *Mississippi: A History* by John Bettersworth, an antiquated text that casts black people as happy darkies in a society of benevolent white folk. This new

Jason Berry is a former political press secretary for Charles Evers and the author of *Amazing Grace*: With Charles Evers in Mississippi (Saturday Review Press).

book not only documents the apocalyptic recent years in Mississippi but effectively destroys traditional misrepresentations of history:

Out of Reconstruction have come several myths, including that of a helpless South suffering unbearable military rule for a decade. Facts show that martial law in Mississippi lasted less than three years, and that the number of troops stationed in the state never exceeded 6,900. In 1869 there were only 716 soldiers in Mississippi. Thus the old stories of "bluecoats on every corner" are false. . . .

Another myth is that of domination by blacks. Although black people started exercising their rights during Reconstruction, nowhere did they hold power in proportion to their voting strength. On the local level in Mississippi, there was only one black mayor (in Natchez) and only 12 of the 74 sheriffs were black.

The margins of most pages contain capsule definitions of key words, quotations from other books (even novels) and terse explanations of difficult concepts. There are full-page biographical sketches of such diverse figures as Jefferson Davis, Big Bill Broonzy, Jimmie

Rodgers, Eudora Welty, Senator Bilbo, Medgar Evers, Fannie Lou Hamer. Chapters are devoted to the varieties of soil and terrain in Mississippi, the Indian culture, frontier years and the depression. There is a full chapter on folklore and literature. Each of these sections is beautifully illustrated.

It is impossible to write a history of Mississippi during the 1960s without commenting on the white supremacist society that existed until then. Although the book candidly explains why things happened, blacks are portrayed less as victims of white people than of a historical tradition, of a mythology that produced fear and violence. The narrative tone is temperate, simple, persuasive: in the section called "The Meaning of Ole Miss," the book says:

Although federal troops were needed at Ole Miss, they did not face state troops. Barnett had talked about interposition and resistance, and his speeches helped cause the riot. But he did not actually order state police to keep Meredith off the campus.

In the end he could not do so, because the Civil War had shown that a state could not openly defy federal authority.

Later on, after an explanation of the Jackson State tragedy:

Turn back to Chapter 15 . . . and re-read the story of the Ole Miss riot. Compare it with the Jackson State events of 1970. On which campus was the crowd more violent? On which campus were law enforcement agents more violent? Can you explain why?

Speaking directly to young people in one of the more truly integrated states in America, the text explains in direct terms how Mississippi became that way. It doesn't gloss over the inconsistencies and the things that are wrong, but examines them in a rational way. It should be of great interest to adults who read history as well as to the young, for whom it was written. It is at present being read by members of the Subcommittee on Social Studies for Secondary School under the Mississippi State Board of Education. This group will make a recommendation to the Textbook Rating Committee of the state board and a decision will soon be announced as to whether the book is suitable for use in the state schools in 1975-76. Its acceptance by the committee is uncertain.

Integration is slowly working in Mississippi; the atmosphere is more positive than it has been at any time in its long, anguished history. One can only hope that this textbook will in fact be accepted for use in the schools, for it is a model of what a state history should be. □

THEATRE / Harold Clurman

All God's Chillun Got Wings, first produced in 1924, is not one of O'Neill's best plays, but I am certain that it is superior to many of the plays that reviewers, who look down their noses at it, welcome in ecstatic bursts of newsprint. (Circle in the Square Theatre.) There is more to it than occurs to the lazy mind.

It is something more than a play about miscegenation; it is first of all a love story. Though central to the plot, the fact that its main character, Jim Harris, is black and Ella Downey, the girl he marries, is white, is not as crucial to the play's significance as are certain other factors. Another hazard in their relationship parallels the torment of James and Mary Tyrone in *Long Day's Journey Into Night*.

In that play, the woman of genteel background, tender and convent-reared, has been turned away from the expected course of her life by an infatuation for a handsome, romantic star actor. The man, son of poor Irish immigrants, has forged his way to theatrical eminence; he is parsimonious because of his horror of his boyhood poverty. And yet he is a rough drinking man whose closest companions are fellow actors, men who move from town to town—frequently on one-night stands—their common meeting places the old-time bars and saloons. Tyrone does not know what a home is, Mary complains, for the theatre was his real home. He hardly realizes that his mode of life cuts him off from her, and her subsequent addiction to drugs, for which she and their children blame him, separates them even more. Neither husband nor wife can overcome the barrier caused by the difference in their origins. Yet, despite the virtually unrelieved pain of their relationship, they love each other profoundly and neither would dream of abandoning the other.

Class differences are also the wrench that agonizes the marriage of Con Melody, the Irish-British ex-officer in *A Touch of the Poet*, and his wife Nora, an uneducated Irish "peasant" whose "kitchen" smell offends him. They too are forever wounding each other, but are bound together by a deep-rooted love—a love without blemish—as pure in Nora as it is in the farm-girl virgin Josie Hogan for the wastrel Tyrone, Jr., in *A Moon for the Misbegotten*.

A perfection of love was what O'Neill constantly yearned for, but which he felt was never attainable because of some accident of circumstances—a fate and most often a doom. (O'Neill's mar-

riage to Carlotta Monterey was a prolonged embrace poisoned by some impediment in both their characters which turned their love to rage.) So it is in *All God's Chillun Got Wings*: Ella Downey needs her husband desperately and his attachment to her is unbreakable, despite the hell which the difference in their color provokes. A social lesion is involved: he fears that his position as a black man in the white world is a fatal impediment to his progress, and she unconsciously and insanely wishes him to fail in his studies so that he may not rise above her. Yet we realize at the end that though their dilemma may prove individually insoluble, he will go on loving her forever.

O'Neill's attitude on the "race question" is made thoroughly clear, not only through the play's title but through the lines Jim addresses to his militantly race-conscious sister: "You with your fool talk of the black race and the white race! Where does the human race come in?"

It is true that since the days of the play's composition great advances have been made in this matter, but to assume that the psychological as well as social-economic injustices have been liquidated is to be ignorant in both respects, not to say willfully blind. Neither the New York theatre audience nor its press representatives are reliable barometers in this regard.

The play is schematic by comparison with O'Neill's best writing; it lacks sufficient density of texture. But insight is not lacking and there is passion, always O'Neill's saving grace. In Jim's feeling for his pathologically unstable wife there is a convincingly lyrical note which makes the play transcend its plot structure and its presumed theme, and lends it enduring interest.

Robert Christian as Jim, with his thoughtful face, the fierce strain of his situation indelibly marked on it, his fervor and intelligence, builds one of the most memorable performances of the season. Trish Van Devere as Ella, wan and neurotically vulnerable from the beginning—the foreboding of tragedy hovers over the couple from the moment they leave the wedding ceremony—also serves the play worthily.

What militates against the production is the long, oblong space of the Circle in the Square. In the first act, a shabby city street, Ming Cho Lee's set is admirably adapted to its purpose; the actors are often obliged to stand further from one another than is natural, but one becomes accustomed to this scenic anomaly. The second act, however, takes place in an ordinary flat in the same neighborhood.

This calls for a constricting confinement to induce the sense of inner turmoil in the conflicting lives, but the expansiveness of the playing area—resembling a great hall—separates the characters so that they seem more like statues addressing each other than real people. The conflicts between them are thus made to appear either picturesquely melodramatic or falsely grandiose. It is, therefore, difficult to judge how George C. Scott, as director, envisioned the play.

This brings me to my growing apprehension that the fetish of the open, the round, the thrust, the arena stages has not generally proved as beneficial to the theatre as many forward-looking theorists hoped or predicted. But theatrical architecture and the relation of the playing area to the audience is something which merits a full discussion and that cannot be undertaken at this point.

I cannot speak with any personal "finality" about *A Letter for Queen Victoria*, the Robert Wilson spectacle (which he calls an "opera in four acts"), because I have not seen his earlier and, according to general report, more representative work produced abroad, or last year's twelve-hour show, *The Life and Times of Josef Stalin*, at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. The previous offerings were wordless and their stimulation, I am given to understand, was entirely visual.

A Letter for Queen Victoria (ANTA Theatre) has a libretto or, at any rate, "words" not to mention sounds—squeals, outcries, howls, broken phrases, odd sentences, gibberish—as well as a musical score by Alan Lloyd. It is a new vanguard manifestation which is scheduled for a limited engagement of four weeks. The performance runs for only three hours.

At present I can only set down disparate impressions. It would seem that the "letter" to (rather than from) Queen Victoria purports to convey what has happened to the world since her day. It is a horrendous, a loony world, trackless and senseless, to be enjoyed only through a crackbrained taste for fantastic images of a universe fallen apart into dazzling debris.

At times these shattered images—many of them of surrealist derivation—are beautiful dreamlike flashes which seem to fix for a fleeting moment the glamour of atavistic memories. Some of them register the history of our time, others its triviality. Tremors and hallucinations of war are evoked; ghoulis and murderously distorted symbols of past experiences pass before us in a reel of mad happenings. The most readily decipherable scene, named "chatter," might do for a revue. In it we see various couples all dressed

in gray, sitting at tables in a fashionable public "room," gesticulating meaninglessly, chirping away aimlessly and unintelligibly. Everything substantial has been reduced to a state of phantomlike decomposition. The effect is often comic and occasionally strangely captivating. There are also blank passages during which mind and spirit are left inert.

No doubt Robert Wilson is an accomplished and gifted man. His scenic sense is extraordinary and, for all its leanings on the discoveries of contemporary painting, original. Yet, I could not dispel the notion that he is essentially a miniaturist. He has made little of much and while that little at times has a certain gripping intensity, its impact on our inner self is fragmentary and evanescent. What he creates will contribute something to the "vocabulary" of the theatre and the dance, and may inspire others to more wide-ranging artistic efforts. I should add that there are many who believe that nothing nowadays can be meant to last, that everything is discontinuity, incoherence, dust. I do not belong in that camp.

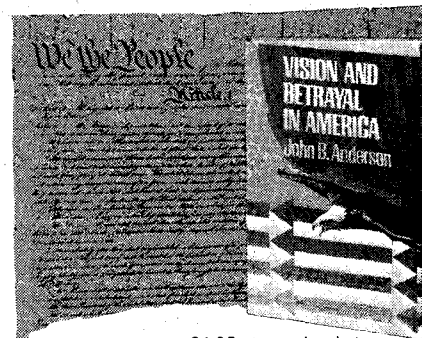
How explain the peculiar hold that the life of James Joyce exercises on us? I have seen several stage versions of Joyce's biography—which is, of course, at the base of his writing—and no matter how limp they were, they always wove a "mystic" spell. The dismal Dublin—dark, dirty, wet and boozy, spiritually troubled, complex in its religiosity, its introversion, rebelliousness and soiled sexuality, its intellectual tension, eloquence in belief and in blasphemy—which Joyce abhorred and could not cast off in all the years of his European exile, is a mythical microcosm of the modern consciousness.

Even in J.W. Riordan's *James Joyce's Dubliners*, based on Stanislaus Joyce's *My Brother's Keeper* (Roundabout Theatre, Stage One, 23rd Street, between 8th and 9th Avenues), I found myself compelled to think once more about the Joycean "mystery." This despite the fact that the show is hardly a dramatization but a series of wispy scenes from the ever recurring record of Joyce's early years. It is interspersed with songs (original music and lyrics by Philip Campanella) which echo the melancholy characteristic of even the most light-hearted of popular Irish tunes.

We are reminded once again of Joyce's whoring, pretended cynicism, uneasiness, stubbornness and the obstreperously troubled atmosphere in the Joyce household, especially in connection with his downtrodden mother, who bore seventeen children in twenty-eight years of marriage and died at the age of 44.

It has rarely been observed that very little is ever said about Joyce's sisters: one

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never sees any of them on the stage; we cannot remember their being referred to in the stories and novels. The Irish, for all their supposed sentimentality, are "models" of male chauvinism. The most telling scenes in the present piece of Joyceana are those in which Joyce's mother figures. She is delicately played by Ruby Holbrook.

The others in the cast are more or less authentically "ethnic." Stan Watt as Joyce's father also stands out with as much vigor as the writing and Stanislaus' recited commentary permit. Joyce as boy and the youthful Joyce are represented by actors who look right and sing pleasantly, as do most of the others. The overall mood is one of gentle reminiscence and not without appeal. □

ART

LAWRENCE ALLOWAY

At the Downtown Branch of the Whitney Museum an exhibition of "Sculpture of the 60's" is on show until April 16. The downtown program is aimed at the office workers around Wall Street—hence the lunchtime hours, 11 A.M. to 3 P.M., Monday to Friday. It is run by the students, who change annually, in the Whitney's Independent Study program. The subject of this show was shrewdly chosen, as the works are drawn entirely from the Whitney's permanent collection. Often the museum's holdings must be supplemented from other sources if an exhibition theme is to be presented cogently, but on this occasion that was not necessary. The gallery, at 55 Water Street, holds a lucid sample of 1960s styles, both rough and smooth.

The decade saw the emergence of at least two groups of anti- or post-David Smith sculpture. There is sculpture that is either uncompromisingly monolithic or consistently modular in sequence, without visual intricacy based on showy welding techniques. The stark geometrics of Richard Artschwager, Walter De Maria, Don Judd, Sol LeWitt and John McCracken exemplify this tendency. There is, too, the prolongation of assemblage, a kind of collage explosion which, as the catalogue recalls, was the subject of a big exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in 1961. Here are employed found objects or materials, characterized in part by their pre-art use and status. Examples in the show are John Chamberlain's play with junked auto parts, Mark di Suvero's battered conglomerate of wood and metals and Lucas Samaras' box, jammed with pins, strings and a stuffed bird. And

there are fringe pop sculptures by Jasper Johns and Robert Indiana.

Since the exhibition was organized by ten people,* it is evident that lessons in cooperation must be part of the Independent Study curriculum. The catalogue shows a successful resolution of the multiple authorship problem. It takes the form of "A 60's Chronology," in which several levels of information are ebulliently woven together. These include the dates of major shows by the artists in the exhibition and related art events, but in addition there are vivid threads of political and social events and trendy episodes. The year 1967 includes the following: Middle East War; McLuhan, *The Medium Is the Message*; Haight-Ashbury Be-In, San Francisco; "American Sculpture of the 60's," Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Laing, *The Politics of Experience*; Nigerian Civil War; Newark and Detroit riots—"the long hot summer"; *Bonnie and Clyde*.

One of the events of that year, the exhibition was called "American Sculpture of the 60's," though the decade still had two years to go. This practice of decade recognition is highly developed in art criticism: early trend-spotting is one of the main entertainments of a rather volatile field. The current "Sculpture of the 60's," by reminding us of the work in conjunction with the chronology, forces an interestingly angled view on the visitor. The mixture of art history and other events of the recent past produces an effect of nostalgia. The wit of seeing the 1960s in terms of nostalgia at this mid-point of the 1970s is the justification of the show. The objects to be looked at are distanced by both the affection and the irony of the organizers. The show includes Roy Lichtenstein's best Art Deco piece, "Modern Sculpture with Velvet Rope," in which the foyer architecture of great movie theatres and restaurants is evoked ironically and admiringly. The way Lichtenstein took the form-sense of the 1930s as his subject is similar to the way in which we are being invited to view the form-sense of the 1960s. The sudden remoteness of works whose recent first appearance was fresh or problematic is a startling experience. The lately new has been abruptly, and for the first time, dated.

Another effect of the chronology is, of course, to remind us of the accumulating incidents of which many artists in the 1960s took only reluctant note. To quote the chronology again: "Beginning

* "Sculpture of the 60's" was arranged by Barbara Aycock, Horace Brockington, Barbara Cavaliere, Shoshana Ehrenfeld, Robert Hobbs, Len Klekner, Carolyn Rugen, Judith Schwartz, Victor Sullivan and Marina Urbach.

of U.S. military involvement in Vietnam, Cuban missile crisis" (1962), "Watts Riots, Death of Malcolm X" (1965) and "Nixon elected President, Studio Museum opened in Harlem" (1968). The attitude of many 1960s artists, before political pressures mounted, is summed up by a statement from Robert Rauschenberg: "I've never thought that problems were so simple politically that they could be tackled directly in art works, not by me anyway, although in my personal life I do take stands on atrocities of all kinds" (1966). However, "these things are expressed over a period of time as opposed to, say, one 'Guernica.'" This attitude, in which art and politics run parallel but un-touching in the artist's mind, no longer seems as satisfactory as it once did. The politicization of the artists by the events chronicled in the catalogue is part of what gives the sculpture at the Downtown Whitney its period look. The confident autonomy of many of these works seems too easily attained within an aesthetic defined purely by internal traditions of style and craft. The 1970s are being defined by this exhibition no less than are the 1960s. □

DANCE

NANCY GOLDNER

For all its risks, improvisation before a paying audience has a built-in guarantee against failure. Even if the performers do nothing interesting, the process by which they work is always fascinating. The six dancers who comprise the Grand Union have known one another and worked together since the early 1960s. They can afford to improvise in a totally open and free-form style. On a good night the action meanders like a daydream. The events are easy to remember, but the threads of continuity are completely elusive, even at the time of performance. The action gathers and falls away, clots into a playlet, branches in several directions, disperses into random doodlings, converges again as a group game or stunt. So it goes until someone calls it quits, usually after about ninety minutes. One evening in March, at the second of the Grand Union's three concerts, Trisha Brown brought down the curtain. She said she wanted to go home to her children. David Gordon told her that first she had to speak from the heart, and since she didn't have children, she couldn't be speaking from the heart. Trisha then said she wanted to go home to her child. Now she was talking from the heart, David said, and all the dancers

walked off. On the following night, the lighting man and the audience terminated the show. One of the six (Barbara Dilley, I think) began to pace around the room, droning into a microphone, "It's time." In a dimming light, the others followed her path, echoing one another's "It's time." When they had converged at the back of the performing space the lighting man turned off the lights, which then became a cue for the audience to applaud with end-of-the-evening finality. Had the Grand Union been more entertaining that evening there's a good chance that the performance would have continued, but the audience, exercising the improvisational skills it had learned that evening, seized the moment and took control.

The Grand Unionists are indeed specialists in seizing the moment and carrying it as far as the idea takes them and their imaginations can take the idea. They are always engaged in decision-making processes. Each must know when to blend his or her actions with someone else's, when to break from the dominant activity, if there is one, and pursue another line, when to drop out of the picture all together and sit quietly on the sidelines. Sometimes it's interesting to watch them watching from the wings, because you can see their minds warming up. The more fluid their brains and the less their reliance on recognizable games or structures, the more they thrive. The second night was a disaster because David's choice of costume, an Arab-inspired concoction of robes and headgear, took the group out of limbo. It also forced them to pay too much attention to David, and it forced them to enact playlets. David is the group's funny man, but dialogue isn't the group's forte. Movement is, and when it takes on dramatic coloration and moves seamlessly, the Grand Union is operating at full blast. That happened only once that night, when Trisha and David started miming stunts together at meditative tempo. Because their bodies never touched, the kinetic dialogue between them could grow to an extraordinarily intense level. As they joggled their bodies into the proper stances, testing each other's center of weight and balance and probing all the possibilities of connection without actually connecting, they made the audience acutely aware of how much trust dancers must feel for each other and how much trust these two *were* feeling for each other. Trisha decided to acknowledge that feeling by undercutting it. She turned away from David and fell out of the rhythm they had established. When she returned to the dance, he stepped out of it. Now Barbara joined them, perhaps sensing that situations involving missed connections are conducive to threesomes. Trisha touched David's

back and then slipped behind Barbara, leaving her with the bag when David turned around. Barbara looked at David impassively. Trisha touched David again, but through Barbara's limp arm. As they elaborated on the idea of "speaking" to each other through surrogate limbs, the tenor of their action shifted from deceitfulness to a wry teasing. Then the action spread to the rest of the group and, as often happens with the Grand Union, spreading out meant spreading thin. No one thought of a way to modulate the action into another mood, and so it died a natural death.

The Grand Union is usually smart and relaxed enough to let ideas die naturally. They're less expert at sustaining them, and I'm not sure they even want to. What holds one to the group, and perhaps what holds the group together, is the definition and interplay of personality. More than any other dance group, the Grand Union banks on the cult of personality. Their appeal is similar to that of the Beatles; it's possible to like them without giving a hoot for what they do. The dialogue I have described between Trisha and David just before she ended the show is unbearably fey, as is much of the Grand Union's dialogue. In the context of performance, however, it is also charming and interesting because it is so typical of Trisha and David. In her unassuming way, Trisha is the most aggressive and analytical of the group. She is usually the prime mover and the one best able to step out of the action and rearrange it, and sometimes stop it. David is the most endearing, especially when he plays at being endearing. He's the one most likely to ask someone to speak from the heart and get away with it. His colleagues fondly suffer his ingenuousness; the audience loves it. David also gets away with being adverse to solo dancing, which is the group's most trusty link between paragraphs. Douglas Dunn, on the other hand, prefers to dance by himself, and the group easily tolerates his lone wolfishness. Besides, Doug's solos are useful; when a group activity is falling to pieces, one can usually rely on him to be doing something interesting in his corner. Barbara Dilley is the most versatile performer as well as the most volatile. She's a good interloper and keeps her colleagues awake. Nancy Lewis is the group's Marilyn Monroe, the smart dumb bunny. Smartly, Nancy tends to avoid pairing up with David. Steve Paxton is always deadpan and vaguely hostile, even when he makes a joke. He's the least likable, but I doubt that the Grand Union would be as interesting without a problem personality.

At one point during the performance Trisha asked Steve why his voice always

sounded like a tin can. Steve's perfect comeback, referring to the tinny walls of La Mama's annex theatre, did not dilute Trisha's irritation, but it did dispel embarrassment. For all the willingness of the performers to play off of one another's personalities and for all the inevitable rough edges, blunders and dead spots occasioned by improvisation, the Grand Union always makes the audience feel safe and comfortable—comfortable, even, about referring to them by their first names. I cannot think of any other group who could make that affectation so easy to swallow. □

FILMS

ROBERT HATCH

Alain Tanner, the Swiss director, makes films (notably *La Salamandre* and *Charles, Dead or Alive*) which consider human relationships at a depth and with a subtlety that are unusual in screen entertainment. Again in *The Middle of the World* his concern is less with a sequence of events than with the unfolding of an association, but the picture does not generate the compelling interest I felt in his earlier works.

That may be because in this case Tanner is using his people to demonstrate a theme—the currently much-banded equality of the sexes—and the shift has brought him up against a rather wooden stereotype. The picture recounts a love affair between an ambitious, conformist, young Swiss businessman (Philippe Leotard), who has been selected by his management superiors to run for political office, and an Italian girl (Olimpia Carlisi), who has come to Switzerland, apparently for the change of scene, and found work in a small-town café.

The man becomes infatuated with the girl, instantly and so powerfully that he plunges into an affair with her in reckless disregard of his responsibility to his sponsors or his loyalty to a wife and child. And she, a somewhat passive though resolute girl, responds, eagerly at first, to his exigent virility. The affair becomes a scandal that cannot be ignored and the man loses the election;

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but he cares nothing for that, and proposes that the two of them run off to a new life, I forget just where. But meanwhile the girl has noticed in her lover a kind of loutish materialism and a disposition to value her for his own purposes. He suggests that she give up her job and move into a flat where she will be convenient to his visits; he showers her with presents she does not want, and talks so incessantly about himself that she feels lonely in his presence. One day she packs her bag and takes the train.

The trouble with all this is that the man is a bore. Tanner has been so concerned to show how men exploit women that he has created a parody of the process. His hero is a very unlikely fellow—an upward mobile careerist who throws over the main chance for a fling at illicit love. Worse, he is a hyperactive egoist of whom I tired a good while before the girl grew pensive. Such a man can be made dramatically valid, but it would take some deep and careful digging. Ironically, Tanner has shown before his gift for such excavating, but this time he is riding the surface of an idea. I was glad the girl got off comparatively unhurt; as for her lover, I cared not a damn.

There are some tender scenes, some splendid photography, but a love story will not fly on one wing.

Increasingly with celebrity directors, it seems to me, the subject of their films is the making of films. I don't mean merely the picture-within-a-picture sleight of reality, though that is forever cropping up, but the fact that material is invented more according to what "works" for the camera than on a judgment of what is worth telling. The medium is the story.

Toward the end of Claude Lelouch's *And Now My Love*, the hero—a light-hearted, light-fingered chap who has risen from petty thievery, through jail (a very French sort of café jail) to cinematic eminence—tells us about his next venture. What is it to be about, he asks himself. The 20th century, he replies, expansively. And what is the unifying theme of that century? Blackmail. And where does blackmail thrive? America; the Mafia; Watergate; Vietnam; the Middle East. Quick, a first-class ticket to the States.

And that, I think, is how in fact *And Now My Love* was made. What is the theme? The life history of the movie camera. And what has happened since it was invented? World War I, the murder of the Czarina, the concentration camps, the postwar millionaires, affluence, boredom, excess. Good: places everyone. In part it is indeed good. Lelouch knows the medium as well as anyone and his screen is consistently interesting. He has a file index of the world's spectacular views and our notorious social mobility enables him to exploit it. He can cut and run and keep an audience panting after him. He has visual wit; unfortunately, he also has a passion for definition that rivals Godard's—what is an American, how does an opportunist differ from an adventurer, who is God in Israel—and a complacent admiration for his own aphorisms that are less than breathless.

So, though I don't exactly dismiss his three-generation history of the coincidences whereby a very rich girl meets a very bright boy, I am not persuaded that this is the way to record the human comedy. I am not a camera and it disconcerts me to be swiveled from quick cut to fleeting allusion to gorgeous prospect, with sight gags substituting for common sense and human relationships that are more than film sensitive few and far between. Lelouch is a master of his trade, but making the trade the product is a bit too involuted for me.

Peter Davis' *Hearts and Minds* is an admirably paced, continuously passionate, frequently moving, sometimes shocking, once or twice savagely funny propaganda film and I would be as well pleased if it were not being shown. Since it is edited from pre-existing footage, it is being called a documentary, but that is an absurd designation, for the picture makes no pretense of being an even-handed report. But because its bias is overt and one that I have held about Vietnam for, it sometimes seems, most of my adult life, I do not object on that score. Nor am I put off merely because, after litigious delays, the picture arrives at a moment when the folly of America's cruel intervention in Southeast Asia must be evident to the most knee-jerk intelligence—I would, I think, have deplored *Hearts and Minds* two, five, even ten years ago.

The fact is that it operates to arouse hatred against hatred, to induce a gut reaction against gut reactions, and by so doing serves to sustain a morbid emotionalism of the very sort it claims to abominate. There are moral differences, of course: American policy in Southeast Asia was built on false hypotheses buttressed with lies and, to the

best of my observation, the film does not lie. Nevertheless, it manipulates its viewers, as for example when it juxtaposes Westmoreland's notorious statement about the low value Orientals place on human life against scenes of Vietnamese families mourning at the open graves of their beloved dead. That sort of editing teaches nothing except that we should despise Westmoreland, which is a waste of nervous energy.

Davis is ruthless with Rostow, who loses control of himself and collapses into mad giggles when sharply questioned by an unseen interviewer, but in truth the lachrymose narcissism of Ellsberg is no more reassuring, though he is presented as a spokesman for "our" side. A returned Navy POW, who mouths patriotic religiosity to captive audiences of children and eager gatherings at women's clubs is distasteful, and a hysterical father who assures us that the death of his son in a blazing helicopter was a noble sacrifice is horrible. Boys who realize too late that they were crippled for life in a fraudulent cause make you ashamed, and the torments suffered by the fragile-seeming but inexplicably tough Vietnamese people make you grit your teeth.

But of what use is this emotional convulsion? What do we gain by glaring at the chopfallen Johnson or sneering at the infamous hypocrisy of Nixon? We were lied to by every President from Truman to Ford. Did that cause the war in Vietnam? Eisenhower, who was the least expert of liars, let slip a mention of tungsten and tin when seeking to justify the assignment of troops to that bizarrely remote military theatre. Did we induce a holocaust to assure our supply of essential alloys? *Hearts and Minds* deals not in causes but effects; not in motives but in agents, and then only the proximate, obvious and thuggish agents. If five Presidents in a row turned out to be liars, was that only a baleful coincidence? Since Vietnam was perhaps the most vocally protested war in history, why did it persist? If the White House was a citadel of villainy, what sort of camp was Capitol Hill?

Hearts and Minds preaches a devil theory of this terrible war, and parades the wicked for ritual execration. But this is not the Middle Ages, though points of similarity could be cited, and excommunication is not our task. We need to armor ourselves with understanding, and to that end the film contributes nothing. Worse, it encourages the luxury of blinding hatred, which becomes a substitute for understanding. I don't condemn the anger that motivated *Hearts and Minds*; indeed, I share it. But I also see it as a weakness. □

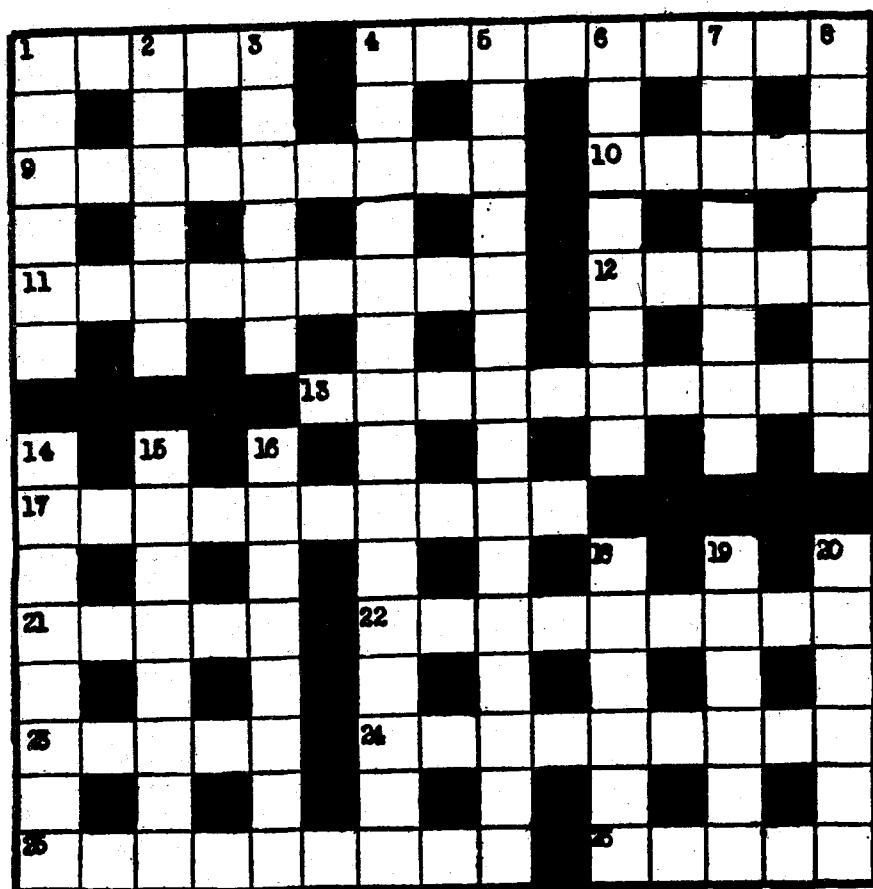
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Crossword Puzzle No. 1580

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

- 1 Proposed topic of 25. (5)
- 4 A cut in the real production? (9)
- 9 Perhaps dry places for a wet time-keeper. (9)
- 10 Hitch, perhaps. (5)
- 11 Lives in the sea rather than live a different way? (9)
- 12 Spin-off character? (5)
- 13 Cause supercilious attitudes? (10)
- 17 Bowers on them could be religious. (6,4)
- 21 Proposed topic of 25. (5)
- 22 Cut back. (9)
- 23 Sort of reluctant without so much French, but represents gains. (5)
- 24 A suit once cut from this, or hanging on this? (9)
- 25 and 4 down When they went walking, they took their lunch with them. (3,6,3,-3,9)
- 26 Proposed topic of 25. (5)

DOWN

- 1 All is not well with the French half of the radical sign. (6)
- 2 The Prince of Wales' motto—taken from Verse I. (1,5)
- 3 For squares, it's corruptly chased in France. (6)
- 4 See 25 across.

- 5 Niggard runs into difficulty, finding the facilities for learning. (8,7)
- 6 You can put a number in without beginning or ending, as an outside description. (8)
- 7 If you make one cut it, it's the wrong kind of stock. (8)
- 8 Proposed topic of 25. (8)
- 14 Change step, like there might be little point to it. (8)
- 15 Bill for tar, according to song. (8)
- 16 2 is upset over the creator of Egypt and the witch of Agnesi. (8)
- 18 Compels one to be the armed type? (6)
- 19 Kipling character gets on nothing but a robe. (6)
- 20 Against poetry, it suggests. (6)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 1579

ACROSS: 1, 20 and 15 across Half a loaf is better than none; 6 and 11 Noah's ark; 9 Entombs; 10 Round-up; 16 Cosset; 18 Effete; 23 Arid; 24 Hot air; 28 Cantata; 30 Roses; 31 Standards. DOWN: 1 Hyena; 2 Latakia; 3 Arm's length; 4 Ossining; 5 Forums; 6 Noun; 7 Arduous; 8 Superstar; 14 Come around; 15 Toe-dancer; 17 Estancia; 19, 22, 29, 25, 12, 13 and 27 Friends, Romans, Countrymen, lend me your ears; 21 Tempter; 26 Noyes.

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